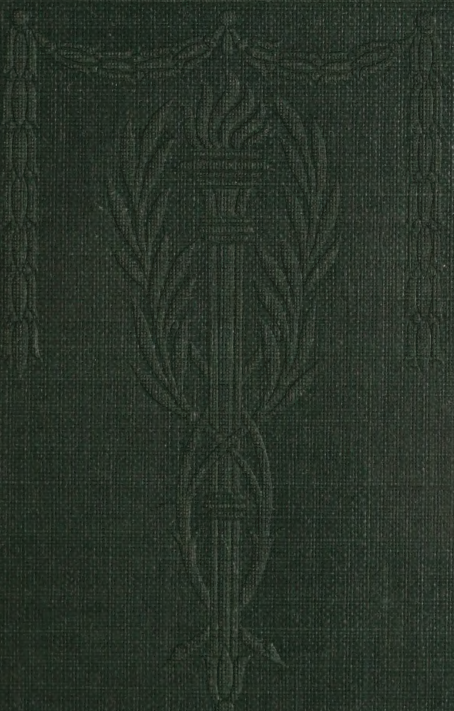
PAUL BOURGET

L'ABBÉ DIMNET



MODERN BIOGRAPHIES

REFERENCE LIBRARY * HOUGHTON MIFFLIN CO. * BOSTON, MASS.

Archive
Collection

This book may not leave the Offices
and if borrowed must be returned within 7 days

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025 with funding from
Boston Public Library

https://archive.org/details/paulbourget00dimn_0

CONSTABLE'S MODERN BIOGRAPHIES

A series of Monographs, Biographical and Critical, of Notable Figures in Modern Literature. With Portrait Frontispiece. Cloth, 1s. net.

J. M. SYNGE. By FRANCIS BICKLEY

LAFCADIO HEARN. By EDWARD THOMAS

W. E. HENLEY. By L. C. CORNFORD

In preparation

SAMUEL BUTLER. By THOMAS SECCOMBE

UNIFORM WITH THE ABOVE

MAHOMMED. By MEREDITH TOWNSEND

PAUL BOURGET

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

LA PENSEE CATHOLIQUE DANS L'ANGLETERRE CONTEMPORAINE
Paris, Lecoffre. (*Out of print.*)

FIGURES DE MOINES
(couronné par l'Académie Française).
Paris, Perrin.

LES SŒURS BRONTË
Paris, Bloud.

THE NATIONAL REVIVAL IN FRANCE
(*In course of preparation.*)

PAUL BOURGET.

PAUL BOURGET

BY ERNEST DIMNET

LONDON : CONSTABLE AND COMPANY LTD.

BOSTON & NEW YORK : HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

1913

RICHARD CLAY & SONS, LIMITED,
BRUNSWICK STREET, STAMFORD STREET, S.E.,
AND BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.

CONTENTS

PAGE

Few personal details known about Bourget; his life not likely ever to be written; luckily his moral and artistic development highly interesting in itself 1

I

Bourget's youth a constant change of scene; his bookish education at the *Lycée*; results of this system 5

II

Débuts as a literary man; hard times; first contributions to periodicals; in those days emphatically a poet: *La Vie inquiète*, *Edel* . 16

III

Alleged crisis and failure. In reality, Bourget successful as a poet, a journalist and especially a critic. Confidence increasing with success. Mastery over adopted formula both in criticism and fiction 32

CONTENTS

IV

PAGE

In criticism the *Essais de psychologie* are an original attempt to read the age through its chief books judged with sympathy and yet with a certain aloofness. The effort partly successful. In fiction *L'Irréparable* and *Deuxième amour* perfect of their kind, but systematic. Bourget's farewell to poetry 42

V

Celebrity achieved, thanks to *Cruelle énigme*. Bourget almost universally regarded at that time as ultra refined, nearly morbid, and indifferent to morality. Surprise caused by *Le Disciple* 54

VI

After *Le Disciple* come more society novels, more or less in the spirit of the earlier books, and possessing the same literary characteristics. They describe aristocratic milieus, avoid original types in order to be more lifelike—a short-sighted view—and secure interest by the choice of a dramatic moment and by careful arrangement. Bourget sees not men and women, but an action and its effects on souls so deeply moved by it that their individual traits are supposed to matter little. The so-called subtle psychology of these

PAGE

analyses merely ingenious. Bourget tells interesting stories about uninteresting people who seldom say anything worth remembering. Contrast with the great books. Artificiality of style—Bourget's novels as a picture of the Age. Their lack of humour; their exaggerated attention to sexuality; their underlying but ineffective morality; their indulgence for frivolous women . . 68

VII

Another surprise when in 1899 Bourget declares himself a Catholic. Causes of his "conversion." Is he more than a *catholique de raison?*—Bourget also a Royalist and a resolute Conservative. Novels, plays and articles written in this spirit. Their stiffness and unwinsomeness 92

VIII

Final judgment. Bourget not one of the great writers, but he has a place in the history of French literature; compared with contemporary novelists he is exceptionally robust; his influence on the whole for good . . 115

A Chronological Table of Bourget's Life . 121

Index of Names. 123

PAUL BOURGET

AN ESSAY IN LITERARY BIOGRAPHY

Paul Bourget is pre-eminently a writer. During a short period, a good many years ago, he was the successful young writer turned a brilliant man of the world, and hundreds of aspiring young fellows dreamed about the romance of his life quite as much as about his literary excellence; but there was a deep foundation of seriousness in him which years, a happy marriage and a natural aversion to anything looking like self-advertising gradually strengthened. He got used to success of all kinds, as we, the public, were getting used to looking upon him as arrived—that is to say, alas, already belonging to the past—he lived a great deal away from Paris, never mingled actively like Anatole France, Jules Lemaître or Barrès in political affairs; his name gradually

disappeared from the newspapers and was only seen on his books; he seemed to take on a second personality as different from the first as his recent portraits differ from his first charming though self-conscious effigies; he never ceased to take part in the moral and literary life of France, but it was as a spectator and adviser much more than as an actor. He is at present a voice rather than a man.

It is not likely that things will become very different after his death. The French are less apt to biographize their writers than the English. We have many literary memoirs, that is to say more or less gossip, but it is remarkable that there are no real "Lives" even of men like Chateaubriand, Balzac or Victor Hugo. Probably Bourget's life will not be written. If it were, the nature of his utterances in the last twenty years, his deliberate seclusion, his effort to keep his individuality apart from his action, would inevitably make the book reticent and guarded, like Taine's life, for instance. A genial communicative mind, a Daudet, a Barbey d'Aurevilly, invites curiosity; shyness, whether natural or

acquired, repels it. No, Bourget's life as a human tale will not be written.

So we are compelled to view it as the development of a mind, but even thus restricted it will have not only its interest but its drama. Bourget has mirrored so much of our times that his work means more than mere intellectual or artistic development: the succession of anxiety, passion, doubt, despair and gradual certitude which went with it is there too, and would be enough to make us realize how much that is purely human underlies the cold chapters of literary history. The story of Paul Bourget's life as a brave and unending effort towards light and art, with its partial failure in spite of apparently tremendous success, is written in his books as clearly as in his private diary, if he keeps one. Had it been different, were we confronted by mere book-matter, I should not have thought it worth while to reconsider an extensive production which for all its merits will appear more and more not to have been of the first order. In fact, contrary to what might be expected, it is the romance of Bourget's life latent in his

work which sustains us through our examination of it, even if we do not know him personally, if we shut our ears to what may still be floating of superannuated gossip about him, and merely go by his portraits to imagine him as a living mortal.

I

Paul Bourget was born at Amiens on September 2, 1852, but the place of his birth matters little. Bourget's father [1] was a professor of mathematics at the *lycée* who was transferred three times before the boy was fifteen, so that Bourget, as he himself says in a phrase afterwards made popular by Barrès, never had any roots. He was christened at Amiens, learned his letters at Strasbourg, began his classical studies at Clermont, and was in Paris—never to leave it for long—before he had finished his course. He has accounted[2] for the conflicting tendencies he felt in himself by the diverse heredity of his parents and by his wandering youth. To his father—a pure Latin—he owed his taste for clarity

[1] Justin Bourget, born at Savas (Ardèche) in 1822, the son of a civil engineer of peasant origin. Judging from the catalogue of his scientific publications at the Bibliothèque Nationale, he was no ordinary professor.

[2] *Lettre autobiographique*, prefixed to *Extraits choisis*, par M. Van Daell, 1894. Ginn, Boston.

and analysis; to his mother—a Lorrain woman of German descent—his poetic and philosophical bent. These apparently irreconcilable tendencies were unified by the cosmopolitan culture of which Bourget is the best known if not simply the best representative.

This analysis was written in 1894 under Taine's influence, and when the wave of provincial feeling we now see at its height was beginning to be felt. It may be right, it may not: heredity is a doctrine which the schoolboy handles as well as the savant. It seems strange that Bourget's visit to America, which had just taken place, had not taught him the immeasurably superior influence of environment to heredity, or I should say origin. Whatever his forbears may have been, Bourget never seemed anxious to strengthen the ties which bound him with them. He does not seem to have regretted his exile from his father's village. There are no allusions in his works—not even in his earliest poetry—to the occasional visits he must have paid it, no traces of a longing for the mellow impressions which we gather in our native surroundings.

Another wanderer—J. J. Weiss—offers a startling contrast. Bourget was the son of a professor educated in Paris and who, like all professors, hoped to drift back to Paris : he certainly heard no nonsense in his home about the beauty of village-buried lives.

What, then, in default of the store of early images on which Daudet, for instance, continued to draw long after he had become the acknowledged painter of Parisian life, formed the centre of the boy Bourget's activity ? Literature, no doubt. Here the English reader ought to be reminded that a French education is very different from his own. We are told that before the age of ten Bourget was fond of reading Shakespeare and Walter Scott. If an Englishman hearing this thinks of young Dickens enjoying Cervantes and Fielding he is not far wrong. But if, on hearing that a few years later, Bourget at the *lycée* read Musset, Balzac, Stendhal, Baudelaire and Flaubert, he merely sees a boy lost in his book, he is deceived.

An intelligent French boy who has, one may say, the ill luck to fall in with these

writers, while in another country he should be writing Latin verse and construing the Greek plays, does not read them as a few years before he used to read *Ivanhoe* or *Quentin Durward*, he longs not only to live the stories or poems he admires, but simply to live them that he may write them over again. The conditions have changed in France of late years. The commercial and industrial opportunities have recreated enterprise—the spirit of enterprise so characteristic of the French in the eighteenth century; the development of sports in schools has dispelled a great deal of the old bookish atmosphere; the nationalist tendency galvanized by the possibilities of war in the last few years has restored the French youth to its old temper; something virile is in the air. But the trend was extremely different in the first years of the Republic, and above all in the last years of the Empire, when Bourget was passing from boyhood. In the Catholic schools a religious training of severe type and a taste for sports handed down from pre-Revolutionary times, along with something old-fashioned in the teaching, decreased the

chances of exaggerated intellectualism. But in the *lycées* there was no counterweight. The boys were brought up by ushers whom they despised and educated by scholars whom they admired; it was inevitable they should prefer brilliancy. Day after day a man whose tastes inclined him exclusively towards literature came and delighted them with the refinement of his judgment and the width of the prospects he opened for them. He addressed them from his chair and never spoke to them outside a lecture-room. Once his gown taken off he left the precincts of the school in which he did not know a single boy outside his own class. He always appealed to the brain and never to the will; he was an initiator, not an educator. Most often his sympathies, in spite of a thorough classical culture, were in favour of modern thought and modern poetry, and even if he refrained from expressing them his young audience read them in his face and heard them in the tone of his voice. Placed as they were between the dreariness of their routine and the charm of this master's eloquence, it would have been a miracle if their welling energies had

not tended towards the only ideal that was proposed to them. Their imagination worked on the details they knew concerning writers' lives, or on the feelings which the poets disclosed to them; their real romance, their substitute for the superseded Lives of Plutarch, were the text-book of modern French literature in which they read about Lamartine, Hugo and Musset; the great things they longed to emulate were those which lyrics naturally express.

So was it that Paul Bourget—although a fairly good scholar, and judging from certain indications one of the few Frenchmen who remain loyal to Greek culture—was even in adolescence supremely interested in the age, its aspirations and their peculiar expression. Balzac communicated to him his sympathy for the most acute modernism; Stendhal his analytical coolness (not his heartlessness); Musset his passion and his passionate eloquence; Baudelaire not only his musicalness but his dangerous admixture of mysticism and sensuality; Flaubert his worship of expression.

"The danger of such books," Bourget has

written, "lay in the disenchantment they were likely to produce, and the unbalanced state of mind which must inevitably follow. Although innocent and sincere, we could only lose our bearings in this untimely initiation in the cruelty and violence of the world. As for me, thanks to an imagination which made the analyses of the masters too life-like for my brain, I fell into an unsettled condition, as unbearable as it was undefinable. It seemed as if my own individuality evaporated into that of the writers I ravenously tried to assimilate." [1]

I do not think this is true. I am afraid that several of Bourget's self-explanations no more correspond to the reality than such theories generally do; he was much nearer a Musset than an Amiel in the years of his life to which we are coming; but it is evident that all his energies were absorbed and modelled by the writers he loved, none of whom was fit reading for a boy; that their revelation of life, incomplete or exaggerated as it was—not only in their single presentment but even in the collective impression they must have left—brutally imposed itself upon him. As far

[1] *Lettre autobiographique*, pp. 8, 9.

as feelings went he was a man, and a man of dangerously full information before having had any experience.

His intellectual initiation, or I should say premature disorganization, was as complete. He tells—strange as it may seem to us—that Musset had been enough to uproot what religious belief there was in him—probably by the time he was fifteen—

> " Et toi qui le premier tuas le Christ en moi,
> Toi, grâce auquel je souffre et ne sais pas pourquoi,
> Musset, ..."

but Musset had only been the first, and more effectual agencies soon worked on his young mind. Taine was not yet the powerful and at first distinctly baleful influence which he was soon to become, but Renan was at his height, and even if Bourget did not read him before leaving school [1]—which is doubtful—he had absorbed not only his religious negation but his philosophy as well. Determinism and pessimism were well planted in his mind, and he shared the belief in science which

[1] It is amazing that a man of M. Lanson's experience should regret that in his day Renan was not on the boys' shelves in the *lycées*.

was universal in so-called enlightened circles at the end of the Second Empire, and which prevailed until a revolution in morals rather than in metaphysics—the awakening from Dreyfusism rather than the advent of Bergsonism—showed its futility.

Of another initiation it is useless to speak. Paul Bourget has repeated so often that the *lycée*, as he knew it, was a school of immorality, and that in his experience looseness of morals is always associated with unbelief, that parodists used to introduce some such confession dropped in an incidental manner when they caricatured his style.[1]

At the end of his course at the Lycée Louis le Grand, then, young Bourget had received all the intellectual, moral and religious shocks which most men only experience when they are twelve or fifteen years older, and yet he had not lived and was eager to live. With all his disenchantments he felt a bubbling aspiration towards the realities—poetic or sentimental—which he only knew through books.

[1] See Jules Lemaître, *Les Contemporains*, Vol. IV, p. 325; also Bourget's *Un Crime d'amour*, chap. ii.

Just then the war of 1870 came. This was life surely, and the sense of a terrible catastrophe might have acted upon a young man as an individual crisis has often been known to do. It was not so with Bourget. Among somewhat contradictory statements concerning the war and the Commune which he has made, is one which I think is the truth. "The present generation," he writes, "read the lesson of the war better than that which saw Sedan." [1] This will seem evident to every student of French thought and literature during the early history of the Republic. The war became rapidly a literary matter (*Soirées de Médan*, etc.), it changed the moral and philosophical outlook of very few men. In fact with many it affected almost exclusively the nerves: the reaction was a scorn for the incapacity of the Emperor and his ministers and generals, a hatred of Bismarck and Prussia, a detestation of war, and in a short time a renewed interest in life, business and pleasure. The idea that something had been fundamentally wrong, that intellectual modifications had corrupted for a while the

[1] *Pages de critique*, II, p. 306.

national temper, and the remedy was not to be sought in mere political changes, occurred to hardly anybody.

It certainly did not offer itself with sufficient intensity to the mind of Bourget to alter its recently formed characteristics : he remained after the war what he was before : highly individualistic, eager and restless, haunted by the images of love and fame, and possessed rather than in possession of the ideas he had discovered in books. Even politics, which in those days ran so high, did not seem to attract his notice. He is one of the very few writers in the early years of the Republic whose political sympathies or even antipathies can never be detected through their works.

II

Bourget finished his course at the Lycée Louis le Grand in 1871. His father probably wanted him to be a professor like himself, and the regular course which offered itself to him was the École normale supérieure, reading for the "licence," afterwards for "agrégation," and then taking whatever post in a provincial *lycée* his honours would seem to deserve. Was he deterred by the prospect of endless examinations or by the fear—undoubtedly powerful with him—of having to leave Paris? We do not know. At all events he soon rambled out of the tedious main road. After taking his licentiate's degree in 1872 he tried Greek philology at the Ecole des hautes études, then appeared for a while at the Medical Schools, and finally decided for what will always be called literature, or making one's living through one's pen. He had already contributed several articles to the smaller Reviews and had managed to get one in at

the *Revue des Deux Mondes*.[1] But this success apparently was not enough to convince Justin Bourget that his son was right in following his inclination. Whatever allowance he may have given him till then was stopped, and Paul Bourget had to face the world. It has been Bourget's misfortune that the feminine sides of his talent —I do not say his nature—have always blinded people to his real manfulness. In spite of youthful illusions it takes more than ordinary courage to launch out to sea in one's very small boat at the age of twenty-one, and Bourget did it quite as bravely as the dogged Brunetière, his old schoolfellow, whom he was soon to meet pushing along in the same manner. He sought work at the crammers' in the Latin Quarter, first de Reusse and in 1874 Lelarge. French cramming does not mean reading with intelligent boys for difficult examinations, but dragging dullards through their baccalaureate. The English counterpart does not exist in France, as preparation for the Government Schools is carried on ex-

[1] This was a weakish contribution in which Mrs. Craven was reviewed after Zola.

clusively in the *lycées*. With backward boys, then, Bourget worked at a very small salary that he might have the right to go on in pursuit of his dreams. His existence, as he has described it,[1] was no joke. He rose at three a.m., an hour before the monks in his quarter, and read or wrote until half-past seven, when he had to rush to his school, stopping a minute at a public-house to eat a *croissant* and drink a glass of wine side by side with workmen. He spent three hours of the morning teaching his indifferent audience the history of literature or philosophy, and came back again in the afternoon to decipher Latin or Greek puzzles with them. In exchange for this work he received the sum of six pounds a month.

He was poor, no doubt, but he was free, and apparently he had the robustness of his mountain ancestors. It is impossible to study his works and the progress of his career during those early years without realizing that the future author of so many fashionable books was living the life of that

[1] *Physiologie de l'amour*, pp. 369–70. *Pages de critique et de doctrine*, Vol. I, p. 284; also *Edel*, passim.

now fabled being, the garret poet, and enjoying much more than suffering from it.

First of all he believed in it. There was no compromise in his way of accepting it: he was a literary man who wanted to become famous through literature and he disdained anything else. Brunetière, who married early, submitted to writing a few school-books, but Bourget never associated with publishers; his excursions in the direction of philistinism stopped at editors. He wrote for those now forgotten magazines *Le Renaissance*, *La Vie littéraire*, *La République des lettres;* he aimed at the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, and in 1874 succeeded once more in forcing the severely guarded lines with a short story entitled *Celine Lacoste*,[1] but he was primarily a poet, and prose was not the joy of his pen. Most of the young men he sought were poets: Coppée and Richepin—already well known—Bouchor, Grandmougin, Cazalis, Plessis, who were to make their way in a few years. The first time he met Maupassant, it was

[1] Very poor. The opening scene between two physicians—even then he liked doctors—was good, but the story was clumsily built. In the same issue was a tale by George Sand.

the poet in him, the author of *Au Bord de l'eau*, that he loved. Barbey d'Aurevilly was one of his greatest—probably his greatest—admiration from the first, but it was because he embodied his double ideal as man of the world and absolutely disinterested writer: this prose writer was a poem in himself.

With these friends he worshipped endlessly at the eternal altars, reading, studying, and repeating all the best modern verse (from Victor Hugo and especially Musset, to Sully-Prudhomme) and devoting tremendous energies to the discussion of the subtlest niceties in the technics of poetry.[1]

He must have written no end of verse, but only two volumes were published during this period of physical hardship and mental intoxication.

The first, which came out in 1875, when he was twenty-three, is entitled *La Vie inquiète*. There is in fact restlessness in it, but it is the image of the noble restlessness in his life.

[1] A letter of Taine's (*Correspondance*, IV, p. 113) shows how much importance he and Bourget attached to mere wording, even when Bourget was no longer a 'prentice.

" Ranimé tout entier par le désir sublime
De revêtir mon nom d'un éclat immortel,
Je gravirai sans peur les marches de l'autel
Où je veux m'immoler moi-même pour victime,"

he says in a piece dedicated to Vincent d'Indy.

And to Amédée Pigeon—

" L'habileté des mains change l'homme en manœuvre,
S'il n'y joint pas le feu dont était transporté
Le grand Vinci devant la Suprême Beauté."

Again to another friend, Georges Saint René—

" Je hais comme la mort les cœurs étiolés
Qui, sans orgueil, ayant borné leur destinée
Au travail qu'apportait avec soi la journée
Ont vécu sans génie et se sont consolés."

And in the next piece—to Richepin—

" Tout plutôt que la vie abîmée, écrasée
Sous les soucis mesquins et l'obscure langueur."

Michael Angelo is the great model he proposes to his own courage. Work till one is ninety, if need be, but at last subject matter to one's mind.

Every word of these aspirations is sincere, and Bourget never wrote anything that was more convincing.

The young man is extremely idealistic. There is sensuousness in his imagination and occasionally in semi-confessions, but the thought of high and pure love is never far, and a poem to Raoul Ponchon—the same who still writes poems on subjects of the day for papers inferior to his worth—concludes with the lines—

> "Malheur au lâche à qui sa chair fait oublier
> La seule vie humaine et sainte : la Pensée."

He has lost his religious belief but he hates mockery, and there is more than Renan's poetic sympathy in the piece in which he expostulates with Anatole France and tells him that—

> ". . . Il est plus noble et d'un esprit plus sage
> D'adorer dans les dieux la plus sublime image,
> Que l'âme périssable ait rêvée ici-bas."

There is not a single allusion in the volume to the humdrum routine Bourget had to endure : evidently he writes his verses to enchant himself, and whoever read them without knowing the history of his life would imagine that he was a sort of Musset hanging between the fascinations

of a flattering world and the calls of poetry. There are traces of a tour in the Mediterranean—possibly with a pupil, but you only see the fortunate poet wandering among golden isles—a sentimental little love affair is located in an elegant seaside environment, and two stories in verse, *Jeanne de Courtisols* and *Georges Ancelys*, are only distinguishable from later productions because they are more tense and dramatic.

Altogether it is a very distinguished, noble-minded and sympathetic young man who wrote these longing effusions, and if we remember that he was only twenty-three it is no mean artist. In spite of the too frequent recurrence of an anapæstic rhythm which, however, is far from unpleasant, there is constant musicalness throughout the volume—the musicalness of Baudelaire, and occasionally Sully-Prudhomme—and hundreds of couplets are written firmly enough to seem final. What is lacking is individuality of thought, power of feeling and éclat of imagery and language, but how many poets possess these qualities at twenty-three ?

Three years after *La Vie inquiète*, Bourget published another volume, *Edel* (1878). It was a novel, and I think it characteristic of this Bourget in the first state, that the novel was written in verse. Remember that the author was twenty-six, that he was unknown—outside a small circle—and poor, that he could entertain no illusions about the future of a book which the critics would inevitably damn as being neither fish nor fowl. Yet he sat down and proceeded to write three thousand lines, where another would have been satisfied with turning out a profitable short story. I do not think that we could quote many such examples of devotion to art.

The subject of *Edel* is thin—the love of a poor poet for a rich and beautiful girl, who, of course, does not marry him—and not exceptionally interesting; treated as it is it would be an absurd mistake if it were not a poem but a story; yet, I think not only with M. Victor Giraud [1] that it is the best poem Bourget wrote, but the very best

[1] *Les Maîtres de l'heure*, p. 251. The chapter on Bourget which one may think timid as criticism, is excellent as a study in development.

thing he ever produced, and I have little doubt but Bourget thinks so himself. Into this forgotten and never very successful [1] little book the Paul Bourget of those days compressed all the passion and fire which made his soul and life so different from what they have apparently become since, and such an effort is one which an artist never remembers without an admixture of joy and wonderment, while a sympathetic reader must acknowledge it by a respectful feeling which greater perfections in other works can never evoke.

The charm of *Edel* lies in the contrast between its absolute freshness and the superannuated appearance of its formula. It is strange that being published in 1878, and the work of the Bourget who was in less than two years to begin the *Essais de psychologie*, it was probably the last manifestation of romanticism. Coppée, Sully-Prudhomme, and here and there possibly Richepin, have supplied the language and tone, but the spirit is that of a

[1] The copy I used is a pathetic old volume with a neat autograph which did not save it from the ignominy of the bookstall.

Musset who had been chaste, and the violence often recalls Hugo.

I will not attempt to sum up *Edel:* it would be the worst treason to a book which has never been too fairly treated. One does not analyze a poem which in its outline is the most commonplace story: that of the poor literary man who meets a gazelle-like foreigner—a Danish girl, this time—falls in love with her at first sight and does such original things as waylaying her at church or at the Theatre-Français, joining her in the Louvre

"devant les Primitifs qui n'ont peint que des âmes,"

or at a ball where she tells him that she is sorry to go back to Denmark, while he thinks himself both the happiest and the most wretched of mortals. The whole of *Edel* is as remote from the far-fetched.

While his lady is in Denmark the writer finishes the great novel on which he had been working, the time drags on, and Edel comes back. He sees her as she arrives at that poetic place, the Grand Hotel, watches her as she drives in the Bois, but no chance of having the last talk. Finally

he receives an appointment at the Palais de l'Industrie—the Grand Palais of those days—where Édel tells him that she has read his book and does not like it: it is too full of horrors, of what they call realism. The young man does not understand that this is the beginning of the end of his dream, but shortly after, meeting Edel again at a wedding party, he hears his doom—

"Je ne vous verrai plus ?"
"Si, dit-elle, dans le monde."

This story might be unbearable. But any story might be unbearable, and some books which *are* unbearable—Miss Burney's *Evelina*, for instance—are, however, masterpieces of their kind, and once begun cannot be put aside even if you fret and fume over every page. What is the key to that riddle ? Simply that the author has believed heart and soul in what he was writing. This is no longer commonplace, this is rare and more than rare, this has nothing to say to artistic arrangement and literary power. When you see a soul throbbing and palpitating before you it matters little whether its

language is that which you understand the best or another.

This is the case with the story of this young man and of this girl who may be for all we know either an angel in awe of her mamma or a deep Northern jilt. For this poor little poet is so thoroughly infatuated that we cannot find out, and it is one of the inimitable parts of this extraordinary work. After Paul—indeed his name is Paul —has received his shock he feels like a murderer, of course, but gradually he forgives as true love always will, and admires and thanks—

> " Merci de tout :—merci d'avoir rendu réel
> Cet unique Idéal presque immatériel
> Que jeune je m'étais fait d'une fiancée.
> . . . . . merci pour la douleur
> Qui m'a creusé l'esprit et m'a laissé meilleur." [1]

Is this sufficiently white and virginal ? Well, the whole book is as fresh and morning-like. Count, if you please, the books in which you will see your lover in the heights of bliss or in the depths of despair without even kissing his love—I

[1] *Edel*, p. 165.

mean the books which you do not consign at once to the waste basket. *Edel* is one of a very few indeed.

And the miracle is, that, as I have said, the whole thing is rank romanticism. The poor fellow has a skull and the busts of Balzac and Napoleon on his table, he is an atheist though full of piety, a furious debauchee though almost innocent, and when he returns to his garret after hearing his sentence he smashes everything and burns all his Balzacs, Stendhals, Byrons and Heines. Constantly you come across such purely romanticist's utterances as the following—

"Car nous aimous les vers si nous nions les Dieux.
Nous les voulons malsains, tourmentés, diaboliques,
Traitant la vie ainsi que les filles publiques." [1]

or,

"Et si je m'entaillais la veine, c'est le rouge
D'un sang jeune, d'un sang brûlant qui jaillirait
Vers le grand ciel." [2]

We can hardly believe that it is Bourget who delights in describing—

[1] *Edel*, p. 122. [2] *Ibid*, p. 27.

" un amas suintant de maisons
Noires et que, de place en place, une fenêtre . . .
trouait d'une tache de sang.
Partout des omnibus filaient . . .
énormes,
Crottés, puants, pareils à des monstres difformes." [1]

Here and there, also according to the romanticist's formula, you fall on lyrical bits with invariably exquisite beginnings—

" O fantômes des temps d'autrefois, fleurs fanées,—
Tu m'appelles ta vie, appelle-moi ton âme,—
Plus tard, quand exilé loin de vous, chère aimée,—"
etc.

All this is delightfully artificial, conventional and learned, and at the same time juvenile and sincere. *Edel* must be the easiest thing in the world to parody, but it must have had few models and fewer imitations. Add, that the poet handles a remarkably firm and flowing metre, and that one wonders on thinking of his later work how he never treated himself to a tragedy in verse.

In 1882 appeared *Les Aveux*, Bourget's last published volume of verse, but the same year saw the publication of his

[1] *Edel*, p. 25.

Essais de psychologie, and before saying a word of these last poems I must advert to the so-called crisis in the poet's intellectual life supposed to have brought about the composition of the *Essais*

III

In the autobiographical letter which I have quoted above, Paul Bourget says:

"My exclusive attention to books was so injurious to me that in 1880, that is to say almost on the eve of my thirtieth year, I was still uncertain which formula I ought to adopt in my poems or novels. *Edel* awoke me by its very failure. Seeing, in fact, that I was getting on in years and that my literary future was far from clear, I fell into a terrible fit of despair. However, I endeavoured to find out the cause of my disappointment, and I thought I found it in the bookish intoxication which had prevented my living my own life, indulging my own tastes and seeing with my own eyes. Pondering over this I thought that my condition was common to many besides me. Thousands of my contemporaries had like myself gone to books for their sentimental education, and must have found like myself that this attitude was the cause of a great deal of mischief. But they must also have found that the deformation I noticed in

my soul was not the only thing. It was remarkable that the books which had influenced me so deeply were every one of them the works of contemporary writers. If these writers had had such a powerful sway it must have been because their books corresponded to intellectual or sentimental cravings in me which were there unknown to myself. They had been men of the present age with all the passions, joys and sorrows of the age. Behind their works the spirit of the times was alive. So I fancied I could disengage Life from that heap of literature, and I attempted to paint the portrait of my generation through the books which had affected me the most. The *Essais* and *Nouveaux essais de psychologie contemporaine* were composed in the light of this idea." [1]

This was written in 1894 and refers to the years 1878 and following. It may seem impertinent not to take the word of a man like Bourget for the history of his own life. But the history of our thought is the most subtle part of that of our life, and whoever has ever tried to trace the development of his own mind must have found that it is as difficult a

[1] *Lettre autobiographique*, pp. 10, 11.

task as reading another man's soul. At any rate the passage we deal with, far from conveying to the reader an adequate impression of Bourget's career in the period intervening between *Edel* (1878) and *Les Essais de psychologie* (1882), seems to me decidedly misleading. Those four years were of the highest importance in his development and very full, and if we imagined, on the strength of this statement, that they can be summed up in a fit of despair and one illuminating idea, we should be very wide of the mark indeed.

I have no doubt that what Bourget says of the revulsion made in his mind by the failure of a book like *Edel*—into which he had thrown all that a writer can put into a work—is correct. In fact the impression was so strong that it caused him to abandon poetry and high-strung poetical individualism for ever. Until his twenty-sixth year Bourget had spoken to us of nothing but himself : after that date he never spoke of himself at all. However, it may be logical to think that he could not rid himself of the habit at once and that at first he only

changed it in appearance: this would account for the personal and professedly semi-confidential character of the *Essais de psychologie* which are supposed to be a confession written as "we" instead of as "I." But these beautiful logical arrangements which look so well in professors' books lose very much when compared with sober chronological tables. Let us admit that Bourget on nearing his thirtieth year tried to make a literary examination of conscience, which being sincere resulted in a telling book, this will be the truth, but let us also go back to the facts of his life for a supplement of information.

If we were to take the autobiographical passage as it stands, we ought to believe that just before writing the *Essais*, Bourget was still as unknown as he was uncertain, and this would help to conceive his mind as the sort of *tabula rasa* he describes. But it would be a very incorrect view. Long before publishing the *Essais*, Bourget was becoming much better known than he says. Let us remember that at the age of twenty-two he had had two articles accepted in

the *Revue des Deux Mondes;* he had written many more for various magazines, in the offices of which he had met friends and admirers, some of them as influential as Catulle Mendès; he seems to have had no difficulty in finding an excellent publisher for his poems; *Edel* itself, though a failure from the bookselling standpoint, had had considerable influence over the rising generation of writers, and M. Giraud tells us that he has collected many proofs of its literary success; certainly, Bourget as a poet had made his mark by 1879 when Jules Lemaître speaks highly of him in the *Revue Bleue*, and long before that date the editor of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* had spontaneously asked him to write an article on the young school of poetry. From 1879 he seems to have been exceptionally successful. He was on the staff of a paper edited by M. Ribot, *Le Parlement*, which shortly after fused with no less a paper than the *Journal des Débats*, to which Bourget began to contribute regularly; he also wrote for the *Globe* as stage critic from 1880 to 1883, and through the year 1880—when he is supposed

to have been so depressed—he acted in the same capacity for the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. Meanwhile, he formed a connection with *La Nouvelle Revue*, and met numbers of the best writers in Madame Adam's drawing-room; he became the friend of some of the most influential among them, no longer poor Barbey d'Aurevilly, but Alexandre Dumas the younger, Taine, Tourgueniév, Leconte de Lisle, etc.; he travelled in Italy, in Spain, in England (every year from 1880 till 1884), and his impressions were in demand; in short, he had only to write to get printed, every day strengthened his independence, and he was distinctly what modern parlance calls arrived. Now, let us consider what was the effect on his mind of these altered circumstances. A French poet is a god to his friends but a prey to the critics;[1] let the poet turn critic, he becomes a potentate at once. This is what happened to Bourget: the moment he exchanged his swan's quill for the rod his position was not the same

[1] One should hear the tone of Brunetière in criticizing *La Vie inquiète*.

and his intellectual attitude underwent a proportional change. It is incredible that much more latitude should be given to the critic than to the poet, but so it is, and it is the same thing with the art critic compared to the painter. No matter how unappreciative your criticism may be, it will pass unchallenged; no matter how perfect your creation, it will be disparaged. The rule of the game is that impressions are more sacred than intuitions, and the explanation is because critics as a rule—art critics more than any others—are incapable of discussing from principles and constantly stare at one another in blank uncertainty.

Now Bourget was and still is an exceptionally well-equipped critic. He is unfair in never speaking kindly of his hard 'prentice years. Providence took care of him. If instead of being a straggler from the teaching army he had been a regular, with the degree he had taken he could only have aspired to a provincial chair or to the most elementary teaching in a Parisian *lycée*. In the *fours*—as French cramming establishments are called—which his inde-

pendent spirit preferred, he might have a poor audience, but his subject was French literature and philosophy, and it is not indifferent that one should have to teach, that is to say learn thoroughly, the main facts of the history of thought and expression in the years when the memory is most retentive. With the grounding he had had this experience was invaluable. It would have given him solidity even if he had been satisfied with secondhand erudition, but he was not: we have proofs that he had made an exhaustive study at least of men like Pascal and Spinoza[1] and of the chief modern thinkers in France, England and Germany, and Taine regarded him as pre-eminently a philosopher.

We may say, therefore, that the day Bourget became a regular critic he could marshall a powerful array of accurate knowledge, and that in his case popular submissiveness was well deserved. The consequence must have been a growing

[1] The *Ethica* was extremely popular towards 1880 among literary people. Many a story has been built on some theorem in it.

confidence in himself and an increasing clarity in his vision. The restless poet of *Edel* perforce became a sober self-possessed organizer of intellectual notions and facts.

Now this transformation of his mind is the true crisis in Bourget's existence, and it is my melancholy belief that he lost by becoming a critic, no matter how remarkable, or at any rate that he lost while becoming a critic. The passage from the boiling confusion of the subconscious to the conscious, of inspiration to composition, of youth to manhood, is a necessity, and of itself a fortunate necessity. But it is the experience of most men that this passage is seldom possible without some detriment to our faculties. Bourget, while trying to make the most of his powers, unfortunately grew systematic. He certainly achieved no inconsiderable results, but it was by becoming so different from himself that many people even in France have no notion of the Bourget I have described so far. As he wrote the *Essais de psychologie*, which we are coming to, he devoted a few months to the composition of a short novel, *L'Irréparable*, and while the *Essais* are a marked

progress on the critical works which had come before, *L'Irréparable* is only in appearance a progress on *Edel*, and, as we shall see, an absolutely new departure in the writer's efforts.

IV

The *Essais de psychologie* is not quite so original a book as it is by some credited to be, but it is a fine piece of thoroughly honest criticism, and its object certainly was a kind of novelty. The old-fashioned criticism, of which the Abbé de Féletz was probably the last representative, but of which Nisard and even Brunetière—in spite of his attention to development—were also champions, limited its rôle to an examination of the artistic value of literary works as corresponding more or less with certain canons or with a certain ideal or spirit. That highly intellectual class of readers cared infinitely less for the author than for his production.

Completely different the criticism of Sainte-Beuve and after him Taine. These book-devourers with a professedly scientific object—the natural history of minds—were in reality deeply human searchers

to whom printed thoughts were only the signs of a living consciousness, and with whom the poem counted less than the poet.

It is to this school that Bourget obviously belongs, and the very title of his book, from which any mention of literature is excluded, implies his point of view. But there is singular comprehensiveness, a condensed richness of humanity in his object. It is not so much the mental attitude—what I have heard Bergson call finely the initial and ultimate gesture—of a thinker that attracts his attention as the effect produced on himself, Bourget, by this attitude. Bourget knows, and it is almost his only confession, that from boyhood his mind has been a reflection of the modern intellect and sensibility as represented by the writers he already loved at school, and he hopes that a careful analysis of their outstanding features will make his own moral physiognomy clearer to himself. Nothing can be more human, nothing certainly is more characteristic of our universal longing towards self-realization than this kind of conscience examination. But this is not all. Bourget is also aware

that his literary preferences have always somehow fixed themselves on modern writers—it is one of the grievances his early critics have against him—and he considers it is a very great advantage, for the egotistical analysis he is indulging in must finally result in nothing less than a portrait of his whole generation.

It cannot be denied that this is a rich and truth-revealing view; one which ought to be at the basis of every critical work. We should never waste our attention on writers not really representative, and whenever we engage in a study it should be with the simple curiosity and sincerity which alone give value to any written as well as to a spoken utterance.

The ten *Essais* appeared originally in *La Nouvelle Revue*, and were contributed at various intervals between 1880 and 1885. Bourget left out Balzac, one of his gods, because Taine had dealt with him in a manner which would discourage re-estimation, and began, very characteristically, with Baudelaire; then came two studies on Renan and Flaubert, and finally the chapters dedicated to Taine and Stendhal.

These first five *Essais* were published in book form in 1883, and were followed in due time by five more on Dumas the younger, Leconte de Lisle, the Goncourts, Tourguéniev and Amiel.

It would be futile to try to prove—as some over-conscientious critics strive to do —that Bourget stuck throughout to his text and followed his own self through ten very different personalities. The two volumes of *Essais* are not after all a book, they are what nine in ten volumes now-a-days published are, with the exception of novels—articles strung together—and it would be puzzling work to endeavour to discover in them more than a certain unity of purpose. It is evident, for instance, that Taine had far more influence on Bourget's mind than Flaubert — whose apparent heartlessness was extremely uncongenial to him—or even Renan; and Stendhal being Taine's master as well as his own ought not to occupy the last place in the first volume. This arrangement, no doubt, is a mere accident in the process of article reprinting Again, in the second volume Dumas alone seems to have been very near

Bourget, and the other writers dealt with—including even Tourguénief — are the creators of literary formulas rather than of mental attitudes with which the critic was in sympathy. Some few pages also are mere writing and confuse in proportion as one is more attentive. There is some fine *galimatias* in the passage devoted to Flaubert's nihilism, and in the same chapter one is startled to find that Bourget after mentioning Flaubert as a man of action tells us that he means action not through but on or against words, the dogged pursuit of final expression. Evidently the young professor with a taste for logic at all costs was not dead in him yet.

However, in spite of these flaws the *Essais de psychologie* can be said to present a satisfactory picture of the French mind under the Second Empire, with a fundamental unity which really lay in the subject. The ten writers whom Bourget examined were all happy through one side of their mental activity, and all unhappy in their final view of life and the world : that much seems certain as a general conclusion. For instance, Baudelaire was happy in his

Decadentism, Renan in his Dilettantism, and Taine in his reverent belief in Science; Flaubert in his *art pour l'art*, and Stendhal in his analyses and cosmopolitism; Dumas no doubt found keen enjoyment in deducing morals from immoral situations, Leconte de Lisle in turning nihilism into lyricism, the poor Goncourts in writing as if they drew, and the poorer Amiel in analyzing himself until he vanished from under his own eyes as we see a familiar word turn into a perplexing object when we look at it for a length of time. This happiness was merely the exercising of the prominent faculty in them with its peculiar tinge. As to the unhappiness, it arose in the ten of them from the consciousness that neither morbid Alexandrinism, nor the multiform pleasure of equally understanding the most resolutely opposed views of the world, nor the search after causes and effects, nor any of the intellectual pleasures which ultimately are at the bottom of literary charm, are enough to blind a man to the inherent sadness of a life about which nothing is certain or in which nothing matters much because everything soon comes to an end. All these men

were after all refined epicures with the pessimism inseparable from all forms of refined epicurism.

This Bourget showed very well, or at any rate made you realize very well, so well that on their first interview Melchior de Vogüé told him that it was really too well, and most readers began to look upon Bourget as a decadent, a dilettante, a cosmopolitan and a pessimist himself. It took the public years to see that the difference between him and his models lay in a longing after certitude, which was a sort of creed in itself.

From the mere literary point of view, which matters considerably here as we follow Bourget's intellectual development, the book strikes at present and probably struck in 1885, by its underlying sympathy with most of the men analyzed, but at the same time by a certain aloofness from them which henceforward will be characteristic of the author. From that time Bourget begins to speak of himself as an anatomist, and that is in fact what he is : a sort of professor keenly interested in the subtleties of modern souls, a demonstrator on the

blackboard or on the dissecting table, as he repeatedly says, a man who knows, sees and understands and whose business it is to make others see and understand. His gravity and knowledge give him authoritativeness, but not exactly persuasion; he is rather intimidating; he has become a totally different person from the restless, eager, appealing youth who only four years before wrote *Edel* less for our admiration than for our sympathy.

What he is in *Les Essais de psychologie* we find him to be in his first novel *L'Irréparable*, written in May 1883, and in *Deuxième amour*, which followed a few weeks afterwards. He is evidently in possession of a method. I would dare the ablest critic to find out through mere internal signs that these stories did not belong to his most mature period.[1] There is nothing tentative there, no hesitation. The author is obviously a man of the world with a great deal of experience, sentimental and other, and a complete mastery over his *data* as well as over his feelings; the naïve

[1] The same can be said of six sketches entitled *Profils perdus*, and published as early as 1880 and 1881.

simplicity of the theme of *Edel* has been left far behind; this new storyteller is in the thickest of Parisian life, without any illusions. The world he describes is the "world" with its vices, conventionalities and indulgences, its women often charming and sometimes pure, but all yearning after love and most of them weak; above all with its sadness, the infrequency of its sentimental success and the bitterness of its many failures. The painter is not unsympathetic, but he is so clear-sighted, cool and collected that even when he convinces us we see him in the background of his tale as calm and unmoved as a physician describing a fine specimen of some rare illness.

From the technical standpoint Bourget is also in these stories what he will remain. He has read Benjamin Constant and the novelists—female even more than male—of the eighteenth century, and he has caught their manner much more than Stendhal's—whatever he may think to the contrary; he analyses his heroes through portraits when he introduces them, through subtle and occasionally prolix baring of

their consciousness when they begin to act; he seems to have already become acquainted with mental specialists, he quotes their books and affects their jargon; he positively seems to avoid characters so as to have to do merely with souls or "cases"; he chooses—very cleverly—a dramatic situation which he lets unfold itself according to an unbending and, I feel almost constrained to say, a rectilineal development; he never swerves from his purpose, which is to demonstrate, never lingers in a wayside nook off the high-road he has planned out for his tale. This is by no means either the achievement or the fault of a beginner. We feel that Bourget will tell endless such stories, and that he can hardly tell them better of their kind.

This means mastery and in a near future recognition, notoriety and fame. Is it surprising that Bourget should be tempted to say good-bye to his previous life and his former efforts? It always seemed to me that his third and last volume of verse, published in 1882, should be entitled not *Les Aveux*, but *Les Adieux*. It was indeed the farewell of a poet to poetry, its joys,

and its insecurity. The musician has become an almost perfect master of his instrument, but he plays it sadly as a dear thing he is soon going to forsake. The poems are passionless and melancholy, constantly graceful, often final in their delicate firmness. Enthusiasm is gone; when it flickers it is at the thoughts of that which might have been, great art and the once dreamed-of masterpiece. The poet congratulates himself on being at last cured of the troubles of love, but he pities himself no doubt for being nearly cured of the craving after too high an ideal.

The following will give an accurate idea of the tone, feeling, and even the rhythm, though it is in this respect inferior to some exquisite songs the opening lines of which are lovely even in the index.

" Le Fantôme est venu de la trentième année.
Ses doigts vont s'entrouvrir pour me prendre la main,
La fleur de ma jeunesse est à demi fanée,
Et l'ombre du tombeau grandit sur mon chemin.

Le Fantôme me dit avec ses lèvres blanches :
' Qu'as-tu fait de tes jours passés, homme mortel ?
Il ne reviendront plus t'offrir leurs vertes branches ;
Qu'as-tu cueilli sur eux dans la fraîcheur du ciel ? '

" ' Fantôme, j'ai vécu comme vivent les hommes,
J'ai fait un peu de bien, j'ai fait beaucoup de mal.
Il est dur aux songeurs le siècle dont nous sommes;
Pourtant j'ai préservé mon intime Idéal ! . . .'

" Le Fantôme me dit : ' Où donc est ton ouvrage ? '
Et je lui montre alors mon rêve intérieur,
Trésor que j'ai sauvé de plus d'un noir naufrage,
Et ces vers de jeune homme où j'ai mis tout mon cœur.

" ' Oui, tout entier; espoirs heureux, légers caprices;
Coupables passions, splénétique rancœur,
J'ai tout dit à ces vers, tendres et sûrs complices.
Qu'ils témoignent pour moi, Fantôme, et pour ce cœur.

" ' Que leur sincérité, juge cruel, te touche,
Et comme aux temps lointains des rêves nimbés d'or,
Pardonne, en écoutant s'échapper de leur bouche
Ce cri du grand pardon chrétien : *Confiteor !* ' "

The one thing altogether lovable in Bourget is his taste for poetry and the devotion he showed it during the early part of his career. Whoever has the same cult will always think tenderly of his first and noblest ambition.

V

In 1885, almost simultaneously with the second volume of the *Essais*, appeared *Cruelle énigme*, Bourget's first real novel. It was a tremendous success, and the popularity if not the fame of the writer dates from it. What we call notoriety, the familiar repetition of a man's name with a few concurrent ideas, more or less definite, is a curious phenomenon which would well deserve study. It is not merely the extension to the many of a knowledge so far confined to the few, a fact the magnitude of which can be measured by counting the frequency of repetition, the number of quotations, etc. There is in it an incalculable element akin to faith and not in proportion with its causes. Between the period when a man begins to be talked about and that when his name becomes so representative of a series of ideas or senti-

ments that, for a time at least, it is common currency, there is an abyss. So far this man had been judged coolly through the ordinary canons applicable to mankind: suddenly he escapes from them and something magnetic replaces the sober estimation. With the ignorant public this magnetism consists largely of surprise with a sort of shame at having been so blind and a corresponding longing to make up by enthusiasm; but the wave does not carry away the uninitiated alone. The very originators of a man's fame, those without whose proselytizing he would have remained obscure, never look upon him after he has become celebrated as they did before. We can never make abstraction in our judgments from the judgments of other people which we feel pressing against ours. Sometimes those judgments are incorrect and exaggerated, sometimes they are right; and it is not the least part of our melancholy at seeing a gifted friend break away from the old intimate circle into celebrity that we notice in the swelling concert of praise a speech or two which we would have been

glad not to leave to others, and hence forward fear to have been timid where we used to fear having been unduly decisive.

Between the years 1885 and 1899 the popularity of Bourget was in constant ascendancy; he had no rival as a novelist except Maupassant (whose quality—perfect naturalness—made him at the same time more accessible to the average reader and less easy to judge critically—for the public is no conscious judge of naturalness); but it is especially in his first great years, after the publication in quick succession of *Crime d'Amour* (1886), *André Cornélis* (1887), *Mensonges* (1888), *le Disciple* (1889) and *Sensations d'Italie* (1890), that he was, as Jules Lemaître called him, a prince of the young. Not only was he very young for such a success, but his art had the freshness of new discoveries, and he had around him all the young writers who believed in a renewal of the novel, all the young women who believed in themselves, all the romantic and everlastingly young who delighted in their imagination of the rising author.

From the literary standpoint he was in

a quiet distinguished manner a sort of revolutionist. George Sand still wrote and Octave Feuillet was at the height of his success when Bourget was twenty, but it cannot be denied that the novelist whose theories were accepted implicitly and examples slavishly followed was Zola. Brunetière had waged a merciless war against him in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* since 1875, and J. de Goncourt had openly said—in the preface to *Les Frères Zemganno*—that success would henceforward belong to realism applied not to low but to high life. This had sounded true, but Brunetière was then looked upon as a promising pedant of great arrogance, and criticism would not be effectual until it was helped by works more convincing than mere arguments. Bourget, then, is partly right in saying that towards 1880 it took courage to write fiction according to a formula totally at variance with naturalism. It might be said, however, that it took above all insight into the literary state of the country, and a presentiment that a transformation of naturalism—for Bourget's first novels are little

else than naturalism in fine clothes and telling its story prettily, subtly and pathetically instead of acting it with furious gestures—would be pleasant to the jaded taste of the public. But nice discrimination does not belong to the bulk of novel readers, and the new writer seemed to them of a completely different essence. Where others had been plebeian and violent under pretence of being powerful he was aristocratic and sentimental.

Even this was literature. To the public at large, which only knew Bourget through his recent success, and magnified his early works by seeing them through the halo, he was something even more fascinating. First of all he was the successful young writer, that is to say—at a period no doubt the most bookish in the history of France—a demi-god; he was evidently in the best society, and it was no small credit to him that he must have gained his wide sentimental experience there; he was a poet, though very few people seemed to know his verse, and it was rumoured that his poetry was of the refined, ultra-modern,

semi-morbid kind which loses the least by being hinted at rather than described or especially read; he was a great traveller, both on account of his fashionable position and of the poetical *ennui* which must occasionally weigh upon a man of such a fibre: he was seen on the Riviera, in England, in Italy, and sent to the papers exquisitely written descriptions tinged with the melancholy of the man who sees with avidity or loves not wisely, and has to wrench himself from places where he would like to spend his enchanted days; finally he was a pessimist, a man who had seen too much of life as well as too much of the human philosophies; his views were despondent no matter how brave, and there was sadness in his brilliant tales; as a specialist on love above all, he was as disappointed as he was sure and searching. All this came down to the multitude through the most elegant channels, and gained in strength, thanks to this origin, what it lost in accuracy.

This popular and superficial notion of Bourget excluded all that is forceful and

even conscious. It seemed as if the young writer had had nothing to learn and nothing to conquer, as if he had merely been born to the luxurious inheritance he was gracefully enjoying. Most people probably regarded him as another Byron, going to bed a distinguished youth one night, and awaking a famous poet in the morning.

Of morality in his works there was no question. Morals in those days were not elegant, and emphasis on such points would have been deemed a lack of taste. Yet the world's code of honour was there, which is something, and under the masterful demonstrations you could frequently perceive a suppressed sigh at the thoughts of man's and especially woman's inevitable frailty, which in a world ruled by necessity, is no doubt a beginning of morality. Also there was a great deal of unveiled or insufficiently veiled flesh in those brightly polished pages, but the writer held that this was made necessary by his artistic views on the *vrai intégral ;* and it is a fact that his analysis of passion was often so near its physical sources that the crowning descrip-

tions could be said at will to be either of no consequence or, on the contrary, indispensable.

At any rate neither those who read *Cruelle énigme* in the indulgent spirit of the eighteenth century, nor those who closed the book anxiously thinking of the young men and women with whom its atmosphere would count a great deal more than its lesson, imagined that Bourget was more than an artist interested above all in the perfection, and possibly in the success, of his works; his ideal might be distinguished, it could not be austere.

Against this conception of the man in the street existed another which, knowing what we already know of Bourget's development, cannot surprise us, but which thirty-five years ago was held by only a few. Men like Brunetière—who, however, described his friend as a refined epicure [1]—or Jules Lemaître realized that Bourget the novelist had not killed Bourget the philosopher, and there was more in him than æsthetic cravings and an æsthete's

[1] *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1er juillet, 1885.

attitude. They knew that his serious training was going on, and they traced it in numerous articles which the ordinary novel reader hardly ever found on his way. They were also aware of his personal influence on younger men, and Jules Lemaître said it was something like a priest's.[1] So there was no great surprise among the critics, but there was unbounded astonishment among the public when *Le Disciple* appeared in 1889.

The book revealed not only intimate acquaintance with the philosophy at the time in favour, but an uncommon power to stand apart from it, judge it and condemn it. The philosophy was represented above all by Taine—a dear friend of Bourget's—and could be described as a mistrust of metaphysics, a belief in science and a serene indifference to the consequences of speculation. A thinker had the right and even the duty to pursue his train of meditation as if he lived on Sirius. (Sirius was constantly spoken of in those days as a remarkably healthful thinking place).

[1] *Contemporains*, Vol. III, p. 338.

He had not to bother his head with moral contingencies where eternal truth was at issue, and nobody had to call him to account for any untoward conclusions which unphilosophic minds might be pleased to derive from his principles. Renan thought so, Berthelot thought so: all the influential, glib-spoken, smooth-written scientific world thought so, and only benighted bigots could be blind to such evidence and *consensus*.

It was a great novelty, therefore, when the darling of the new generation, the man who was supposed to have lent charm and poetry to a civilization based on nothing but science, and consequently to side more or less explicitly with science, suddenly was seen to side against it, and achieved his greatest success with an open denunciation of it. To some of the scientists it was a scandal; to some others—Taine more than any one else—it was a sorrow, the melancholy announcement that they had had their day; to the numberless passive minds which had accepted what they were told to believe, it was a staggering shock; to the

more intellectual portion of young Frenchmen it was a triumph, the signal of a liberation they had longed for without quite knowing it.

It would be wrong to say that *Le Disciple* was a divination, a perfect stroke of genius, which Bourget owed exclusively to his acumen. Even if Bourget had only had Herbert Spencer to go by—he thought very highly of him—the limitations to science laid emphatically in that philosophy would have helped him to discover partial bankruptcy where science insisted on complete success. But Boutroux had written his book on the *Contingence of Natural Laws* in 1874, and Bergson, still unknown, was already possible. Besides, the lesson of the war of 1870 was beginning to tell, and Bourget pointed it out pathetically in his preface : independence of morals from so-called science was at this time of day an absolute necessity if France wanted to live. The certainty of this must have made many healthy minds anticipate Bourget's influence long before *Le Disciple* appeared.

However, it remains true that Bourget's

book was the first intimation the reading public had of a change in cultivated opinion, which at the present day is clearer than ever.

Le Disciple from the mere literary point of view made a hit, and carried its lesson far. M. Sixte, as the sincere but dangerous positivist, Greslou, as the rascal with scientific motives to his low selfishness, promptly became household names and helped to visualize the truth which otherwise might have lain dormant in the abstract. Thanks to its combination of dramatic qualities with forcible thinking, *Le Disciple*, appearing at the right time, was a great book, and its publication will remain a date in the history of French thought and morals. It marked a turning of the road quite as much as *Le Génie du Christianisme.*

If *Le Disciple* had been pressed to its ultimate conclusions it would have appeared not only as an arraignment of the materialism rampant in all the realms of thought since 1850, but as an implicit defence of Christianity. Some clearer-sighted readers

saw it. To the mass it was only the revelation of another and a stronger Bourget than they had suspected: they saw there was philosophy under his poeticalness and a sense of moral responsibility under the apparent unrestraint of his descriptions. From that time a sensation of mastery was associated with his name, and not merely the fascination invariably bound with early success, charm and refinement.

Yet, for twelve years after the *coup de théâtre* of *Le Disciple*, Bourget wrote nothing that was either a repetition of the same effort or even an attempt to produce effects of the same kind. *Un Cœur de femme* (1890), *Terre promise* (1892), *Cosmopolis* (1894), *Idylle tragique* (1896), *La Duchesse bleue* (1898), and *Le Fantôme* (1901) were all society novels in Bourget's first manner, and *La Physiologie de l'amour moderne*—a series of sketches contributed to *La Vie parisienne* in 1891—was regarded by most as unnecessarily outspoken and every now and then gratuitously libertine. As Paul Bourget was nearly fifty at the beginning of this century we seem to be

warranted in viewing these works of his maturity as a whole in the vein which we saw him enter with *Les Essais de psychologie*, *L'Irréparable* and *Cruelle énigme*, and we may study their characteristics as one literary development.

VI

Paul Bourget lives in the rue Barbet de Jouy, in the heart and core of the faubourg St. Germain. It is a quiet by-street to which nobody seems to go, and from which nobody seems to roam: the stillness must give its inmates a pleasant sense of long duration and stability. Before living there Bourget had rooms in the rue Monsieur, hard by, just one shade less aristocratic. Before that he lived in the Latin Quarter, but one cannot help imagining him frequently wandering from the stagnation of the old scholastic alleys, the glare of the boulevard St. Michel and the literary beehive animation of the Odéon to the eyot of formal places between the boulevard St. Germain, the rue de Varenne and the Invalides; more seldom—at least after the period of early dazzling when he wrote *Edel*—to the great Imperial roads radiating

from the Etoile, the non-republican neighbourhood of the Elysée, or the boulevards with their theatres, shops, large caravanseries and elegant foreigners.

What attracted him there ? It is a great shame that one cannot write about Bourget without asking one's self and answering that question with great risk of descending from the serenity of true criticism and making one's self the echo of ill-natured comments on his evident likes and dislikes. Thousands of people have said that Bourget is what the French language, tampering with an English word, calls a snob, a man whom titles, luxury and all the outside gloss of aristocratic distinction allure as the bright light allures insects. The notion or the prejudice stood for years in the way of his success with men worth his while, and leaves even now an everlasting film which must be hateful to the novelist.

It is difficult to read Bourget's works without somehow conceiving the notion that he would have given anything to belong to the world he has so complacently described, *pour en être*, as his friend Barbey

d'Aurevilly used to say with an emphasis that makes us suspicious of his apparent confidence. Are we right ? Is there really in this man whom mental work ought to have made perfectly happy, a secret longing for what can never be ? After reading his latest and re-reading his earliest works carefully, I declare honestly that I do not think so. In many places Bourget talks quite simply and in just the right tone of his origin, and it is unlikely that a man who was devoured in his youth and early manhood by the pure ambition of producing a masterpiece, should have harboured at the same time a cankering regret of something inferior. I do not think there is much difference between the spirit of Bourget and that in which Sainte-Beuve indefatigably wrote about eighteenth-century *grandes dames*, but Sainte-Beuve never gave the impression that he wished to be more than a distant admirer. Perhaps Bourget's mistake was to live in the rue Barbet de Jouy instead of in the rue de Babylone : trifles mean a great deal in the realm of trifles.

Certain it is that long before fixing his

abode in those charmed quarters, Bourget knew all about them. His head was full of mansions between *cour et jardin*, of visions of châteaux and parties, of elegant figures about which "there can be no mistake"; he knew the poetry of the late afternoon when women drive home dreamy, and he knew the exciting half-hour before dinner when ladies' men look as if they went out a-hunting; he knew the cant of the club, of the smoking-room and the boudoir; when it was flat he tried to make it terse; he collected the metaphors with which the chase, the turf and the fencing-room relieve somewhat the colourless language of the day, and he treasured from old gentlemen's conversations the raciness which the old gentlemen themselves slily treasure from eighteenth-century memoirs. As a more remote background his imagination saw the far-away places where the elegances of two continents—two worlds I might say also—combine their dazzling effects: the lovely Mediterranean ports where fairy yachts ride at anchor, Florence, Rome, Palermo, all that used to delight the ad-

mirers of Marie Bashkirtseff, and even—more secretly—those readers of *Le Récit d'une sœur* who were not quite sure which side of the book—the brilliant or the austere—fascinated them. Right or wrong, Paul Bourget could only be the painter of high life.

Now what use would he make of his fine ladies and gentlemen? The secret of novel-writing can be made public without treason: if you write lifelike kinematographic scenes, no matter how disconnected, you can compel your reader to go on, for you are playing on the instinct which makes a Newton stop in the street to look at a dog fight; if your scenes are interdependent you may easily become exciting, for we want to know what will happen; if you have the much rarer talent to hit upon truly impassioned speeches straight from human nature we stop to listen to you with astonishment and reverence; and if you place enough of these speeches on the lips of your *dramatis personæ* to make them look like real characters you are a genius, even if you are an awkward story-teller,

which in all likelihood you will not be.

Roughly, novelists can be divided into two classes: first, those who see life in a character at once, and care more for the character itself than for incidents—Fielding, for instance, or Dickens, or Balzac—and manage to remain true even when they are wildly improbable. These highly-gifted writers can take extraordinary liberties with their creations, their story or their readers, it does not matter; where we see life we are spellbound. The other class consists of the writers whose ideal is above all to be true to life, to copy it so faithfully that we shall be taken in by the representation and affected by it as if it were the reality. These are inclined to avoid characters as monopolizing attention: they select ordinary men and women and place them in circumstances which have nothing romantic or exceptional, but then they make them act and speak so truly, they explain them so clearly, that we are perfectly convinced of their reality and show no surprise if in the course of our

experience we hear that they have actually existed.

How, in that second method, is the writer likely to avoid triviality and flatness? Evidently by choosing the moment in these uninteresting lives when some event galvanizes their dormant energies and carries them away in its development. *Adolphe*, by Benjamin Constant, is the masterpiece of this kind of composition. *Silas Marner* would be another if so much of its excellence did not lie in its quaintnesses.

Paul Bourget is confessedly a disciple of Constant, and aims at convincing rather than amusing, teaching or moving us. Whether from principle or from inability, he seldom selects any but almost commonplace characters with no exceptional, only accidental, power or passion. Octave Feuillet, who described the same milieus, is very different: his heroes, and especially his heroines, invariably possess in some remote fold of their consciousness something truly heroic; they recall to us what Madame Campan says so wonderfully of one of Louis Quinze's daughters joining the

Carmelite nuns: "Only one sublime action was possible to Madame Victoire, she did it." They are always capable of a violent passion and of a violent sacrifice. Bourget's characters are never picturesque—he always seems ashamed when they border on that—and they are never great. When they are meant to be—Poyanne, for instance—in *Un Cœur de femme*, they are failures. They are aristocrats insomuch as they make the gestures and talk in the accent of their class, not because they have any reserves of ancestral energy. It has been pointed out often that not one of them stands out clearly in the memory of even the most enthusiastic reader. The characters in *Cosmopolis* seem to be exceptions, but their features, properly analyzed, will be found to be racial, not individual, and the rare technique of the book helps in deceiving the reader.

This being the case, Bourget's puppets would be unbearably dull if he trusted to what they will *say* to interest us. Such effete creatures can never say anything telling. But his method, and his success,

consist in making what they say mere indications of what they are made to do. In other terms, the interest of his books depends fundamentally upon their plots. Bourget, who seems to be only moderately gifted as a dramatist, has made a careful study of the drama, especially the drama of Alexandre Dumas the younger, and never wrote a novel that could not be conceived as a tragedy as well. Now, a tragedy consists essentially in a crisis in which even sluggish people are bound to bare their souls for our inspection, and that is, in fact, what the novels of Bourget invariably are. They are interesting both as stories and as mental or moral revelations. The author may see his plot before seeing his characters, which is a logical, not an artistic, creation, but the plot he handles with rare vigour, and though I criticized him—when speaking of *L'Irréparable*—for stiffly refusing to swerve from it on any account, I am not blind to the excellent results he obtains by adhering thus strictly to his method.

Take *Un Cœur de femme*, for instance.

The writer wants us to follow Juliette de Tillières from the moment when she feels the vaguest interest in Casal till she sacrifices to him M. de Poyanne—a lover who might be a husband. Each chapter will be planned as an answer to a separate note of interrogation in the reader's mind : Does Juliette really care for Poyanne ? Is Casal's interest more like true love than passion ? etc., and treated as an individual little drama in which nothing extraneous will be admitted. The effect is sure. These stories may be insufficiently visualized, their precision, their straight and rapid progress, their admirable arrangement—carefully balanced before the effervescence of composition begins—not only give them something classical, but prevent us from seeing their fundamental shortcomings. In every art, in fiction quite as much as in painting, actual perfection is not necessary : the reader is made unconsciously to collaborate with the creator. When we begin reading a book, our own mind working on its first data supplements plentifully what we are really given. The dramatic interest

of Bourget's stories acts in that way. It holds us so strongly that we may be occasionally induced to believe that the characters disappear from our minds as individuals not through any incompetency of the writer, but because a crisis always tends to develop our most general and most human sides.

A great deal has been said about the renovation by Bourget of the analytical method consisting in expounding in the minutest details the concatenation and interdependence of our motives and feelings. With some critics it would seem as if this "weighing of flies' eggs in cobweb scales" were the chief merit of *Cruelle énigme* and *Un Cœur de femme*. Certainly Bourget is a master of that method, and prolix though it be it often gives an air of plausibility to unexpected developments and an appearance of depth to somewhat trivial notations. But it is a very secondary merit compared with the gift of creating life, and it is more likely to delight the half-educated than the really well-read. I am surprised at the fuss which some people

make over a mere *procédé*, and no less surprised that good critics should not seem aware that a great deal of Bourget's aloofness from his characters and doctoral attitude is the result of indulging in these performances.

A very different thing no doubt helps in giving Bourget's stories a sort of reality which often makes illusion: I mean the unbounded and truly poetic pleasure which he finds in the background and atmosphere of his tales. The happiness floating in the air, combined with the luxurious environment in *Idylle tragique*, *Terre promise*, *Cosmopolis*, the exquisite Italian setting of that perfect gem, *Un Saint*, act powerfully on the writer himself. Even when he refrains from describing them, a thousand charming details are present to his mind and throw their reflection over his language which at once gains in fluidity and brilliance. *Sensations d'Italie* is in point of style by far the best of his works, and has few rivals in the literature of modern travel. Surely the sunshine, the stone-pines, and the happy hills which we see in the background of

so many of his tales, enchant him as very different landscapes enchant Hardy. Whenever a man writes with such an accompaniment, his inspiration becomes stronger and less conscious, and the reader feels its fascination. Even when Bourget's taste for an aristocratic environment and atmophere is a fault it is none the less a power, as every sincere feeling is a power in literature, and even prejudiced minds can hardly resist it. It is a sure instinct, then, that caused Bourget to look for subjects and characters in the great world, and it is a rare understanding of the technique of novel-writing that put him on his guard against the pleasure which the peculiar poetry of the circles he described gave him. Many another has wrongly imagined that what he so keenly enjoyed others would enjoy as well, but Bourget has learned from Balzac and Dumas that a story must hang on a catastrophe, and he makes everything subservient to the dramatic elements.

All we have stated so far can be summed up by saying that Bourget, with a great deal of cleverness and often with true artistic

delight, has written highly interesting stories about rather uninteresting people. This amounts to a most severe condemnation, for good writers make all their characters interesting. In fact, Bourget's deficiencies are not difficult to see. The most obvious, and to a practised eye the most serious, is the weakness of his details. A good painter, it is well known, can be detected by examining even a few square inches in the corner of a canvas. It is not otherwise with a good writer. Dip not only into *Hamlet*, but even into one of the less famous plays, or into *Tom Jones*, or *Nicholas Nickleby*, or *Vanity Fair*—facile though it often be—half a page will invariably be enough to make you feel the presence of a superior gift. Submit Bourget to the same test he appears at a terrible disadvantage. Here and there you will meet with a terse sentence embodying the experience of a club La Rochefoucauld, but this only means philosophic pregnancy. Real human pith is always wanting. In 1885 Brunetière already observed that the minor figures in *Cruelle énigme* had no life in them, and

added that this was enough to exclude the author from the knot of real creators. But even Bourget's chief characters express themselves weakly. They do, they are made to do things, they never say anything worth while. In the whole of *Un Cœur de femme*, to which I referred above, we are conscious of a true heart vibration only once, and it is not in a dialogue, but in a touching letter—in the style of Mme. de Souza's—from Poyanne to Mme. de Tillières. The dialogues are uniformly flat. The same can be said of *Mensonges*, which I think very much overrated—place it beside *La Cousine Bette*—and which owed its success to the supposition that it was *à clef*. When the feelings to be expressed are easy, Bourget is prolix in spite of his subtle ingenuity; when they become violent and stir the whole soul and ought to result in those speeches which arrest us at once when we skim through the great books, the writer shies: we are briefly told that this or the other happened, that the antagonists were overwhelmed by this or that feeling, we never see or hear them, and the disappoint-

ment would be unbearable if, as I said, the dramatic theme itself did not carry us along.

Also, we do not find fault with Bourget for telling us at great length what his people think as if he were making his own and not their conscience examination—even the most sophisticated readers accept the formula, no matter how conventional, which a novelist chooses to adopt—but we are frequently informed of a vital step in a character's development through a mere statement, and this is inartistic and fatal to the perspective. We long for one minute of forgetfulness on the part of the author; we should be thankful if only for a page or two he would cease interfering, let go the thousand little threads which he holds in his dexterous but tyrannical fingers, and release us as well as his characters. But he does not do it.

His style is another element of artificiality which makes us realize his everlasting presence. He is not always fortunate in his wording, which—except in his travelling impressions—is frequently opaque and

dusty, but he thinks of it all the time, and does his best to make it terse and rhythmical. This, in impassioned dramatic parts, is evidently a mistake. There is something ludicrous in the graceful swaying of a sentence like the following : " Je vous ai aimé, Raymond, je vous aime encore " ; and when Bourget's characters bow and curtsey to one another with a grand courtly display of " Monsieur " and " Madame " five minutes before accidents very remote from the " Princesse de Clèves " spirit we are more amused than convinced.

It would take more space than I have to point out the progress made by Bourget in *Idylle tragique*, *Terre promise* and *Cosmopolis*, his real achievements in the second part of his " worldly novelist's " period. It is remarkable, but it is only a perfecting of his technique, already admirable, and does not lift him up above himself, as Balzac seems to become another man with the first volumes of *La Comédie humaine*. His characteristics remain those of ingenuity, not genius, and whilst his books grow more and more readable—a true word

to which I attach its full sense—they never acquire that haunting quality which the great representations of life possess.

To this general estimate we should add a word concerning the historical and the moral import of Bourget's novels. Indeed, he seems to have thought more fondly of his works in these respects than as mere literature.

Like Balzac, like Zola, like all the writers who draw much on the same vein, and gradually see their notes accumulate and their pile of volumes rise, Bourget has had the temptation to regard his books as a representation of the modern world. He speaks of himself in many places as a clinical physician who watches society as it tosses on its bed, and describes its symptoms. Certainly the novels which he wrote from 1885 till 1901 are a faithful picture of the French leisured classes, but a rather narrow picture. We see them as the jealousy of the democracy and their own gradual self-effacement have made them, that is to say entirely separated from the rest of the world, and with consequently

restricted interests. Their isolation and inactivity coincide with a stage in the moral evolution in which not woman, but passion is made the alpha and omega for thousands and millions, and passion is their sole object. Time was when woman used to be in literature as in reality a reward and a complement, not an obsession. Bourget has seen a very different state of things, which his novels mirror. These books are not love-stories by any means, they are the illustration of an exaggerated magnetism in one of the poles of human nature, and a luminous description of the power of the flesh in the last decades of the nineteenth century, nothing else. Their pessimism makes it clear that the kind of love to which they endlessly revert is a scourge and not a human development, and as an evidence of the abnormal sexuality of our age they will no doubt be valued by future historians. But is this point of view the only one? Compared with Balzac's, Bourget's so-called picture dwindles into insignificance, and even restricted to its narrow proportions it leaves out a great deal that ought

not to have been neglected. To confine ourselves to the most obvious omission, how shall we believe that fine ladies and gentlemen, no matter how desperately in love, never laugh ? Through thirty odd volumes Bourget never laughs—though according to Jules Lemaître he has plenty of geniality, and a vein of grim fun certainly runs through *La Physiologie de l'amour*—and whenever he indulges in a sickly smile he looks as if he were afraid of catching himself doing something ill-bred. Bourget's books are a faithful representation of love considered as an occupation and varied to infinity by the collusion of imagination and leisure, but they have to be abundantly supplemented to be anything like an image of modern life.

As to their moral effect, it can easily be gathered from what we have just said. Their distinction and their pessimism are a true if somewhat secularized beginning of morality. Elegance is akin to Christian idealism, and sadness is at the root of detachment and in due course of renunciation. The lesson implied in Bourget's

stories is the same as that which we read in every indulgent life, a bitter one, and as such less Christian than stoical, and perhaps less stoical than epicurean, though bitterness belongs to many a good remedy.

But the lesson of life is seldom sufficient to detain a man's attention when temptation is keen, and the lesson of books is much weaker again. I do not suppose that Bourget, who has lived and knows, ever entertained much hope of *Un Crime d'amour* or even *Terre promise* acting as moral curbs. All he said about their virtue meant more desire than actual satisfaction. He must realize that the preaching of such novels is mere chaff in the wind. A young man with passion on him will much rather remember Barbey d'Aurevilly's *Bonheur dans le crime* than *Cruelle énigme*, and cherish repetitions he knows of in real life of the former story than the fabled failure of de Querne or Casal. Besides, a vague instinct, literary as well as vital, will tell him that there is a great deal in Bourget's pessimism that is purely artistic, and that at the time he wrote *La Physiologie* if

his talent had been for drollery instead of elegance he might very well have anticipated Donnay or at least Lavedan, and produced gay instead of dark pictures.

So there is little positively moralizing in these novels, and there is a great deal that is dangerous. In an atmosphere so overcharged with that peculiar magnetism we were describing above there is little choice between saying nothing and running the risk of being baneful. The less that is said about what is called love in modern fiction, its omnipresence, its intoxicating fascination and even its evils, the better. Now Bourget's novels treat of nothing else than this universal disease, and describe its symptoms with enough charm to make them more attractive than their consequences are dreadful. No falling back on intentions or on the hidden lesson in the tales will place Bourget apart from the too many writers with whom it would seem that love is the one possible, instead of merely being the easiest, subject. With all his talent he has been one in a chorus.

Many critics—M. Georges Sorel more

forcibly than the rest—reproach Paul Bourget with having been unduly tender to the lazy, frivolous woman whose chief excuse is the elegance of her manners or even of her clothes. It is difficult to contradict them. Bourget's tone in speaking of women has a decidedly decadent ring about it, and I have known it border on the maudlin. We understand what Jules Lemaître means when he says that some men with a classical education and classical tastes cannot bear Bourget's spirit.

* * * * *

On the whole, Bourget in the height of his success appears to have been above all an ultra-refined sentimentalist whom somewhat coarse realities did not scare, and he was regarded as such. Compared with Zola, the Goncourts, Maupassant, and above all Anatole France, he seemed morally distinguished, but nobody ever thought of calling him healthy. Even his serious and philosophical turn of mind was not—in spite of *Le Disciple* and numerous articles—known outside a small circle. The public at large would not have been

surprised if at the period of his life we have reached he had been satisfied with the influence, such as it was, which he possessed, and had comfortably settled in his literary fame.

VII

Considerable sensation, therefore, was created when, in the last months of 1899, it was rumoured that Bourget openly professed not only a resolutely ethical but even a religious and a Catholic creed, and that he intended publishing a carefully revised edition of his works. It took the public some time to find out that this rumour was no mere talk, and that it had its origin in an elaborate Preface to the writer's *Complete Works* published by Plon. This *ne varietur* edition cost eight francs a volume, and prefaces are apt to be skipped, so that Bourget's decisive step could not be as conspicuous as the movement he had made ten years beforehand when writing *Le Disciple*. I remember the impression which the news caused in purely Catholic milieus, and it helps to realize how remote Bourget was supposed to be from

them : there was an admixture of joy at annexing one of the great talents of the day, but there was a doubt of the genuineness of this conversion if the writer republished his works at all. In unbelieving circles the usual shrug was soon perceptible, with a hint that Bourget was now the prisoner of the superstitious if frivolous world he had so long painted and a prophecy that his talent would soon wane, in fact, had not his talents been terribly overrated ?

Viewed as a purely intellectual evolution, the conversion of Bourget, as it was then called, ought not to have caused much surprise. Apart from a passage on Renan's *Vie de Jésus*, which he had judged in 1883 from the dilettante's standpoint, he had never said anything likely to give positive offence to Catholics. On the contrary all his early work had been tinged with the regret—even when it was youthfully boastful—of having lost the faith; and since he had become celebrated he had always approached religion with a respect that was a beginning of religion in itself. In 1894 he had publicly spoken of himself

as a believer in desire, and he had certainly done his best to make a religious basis of the philosophy—Herbert Spencer's—in which he found himself the most at home. His efforts, we must say, are pathetic, and it is difficult to see him strive to build faith on Agnosticism without wondering whether in his heart of hearts he had done more than provisionally give up the faith. Undoubtedly the germ he had never killed in him only waited for favourable circumstances to vegetate and prosper.

What the circumstances were we do not know—it being one of the characteristics of Bourget to become more and more shy or ashamed of personal confidences as he became better known—yet we can safely conjecture some obvious influences beside the logical development which he himself points out.

It is useless to speculate about the probabilities of Bourget's life if it had been unsuccessful, but success certainly is a considerable factor in a man's development, and so is happiness. Bourget might have been intellectually restless much longer

than he really was, if towards the time when men's opinions settle he had not been happily married and generally looked up to, consulted and followed. It is one of the extraordinary mistakes of our time—one which marks it clearly as a period of decadence—that novelists and dramatists, because they embed a little philosophy in a great mass of stuff exclusively designed to amuse, should be regarded as the moral guides of their generation. Bourget who has been all his life and still is under the teaching of biologists, philosophers and sociologists whose superiority he acknowledges, realizes this better than anybody else. Yet he could not escape from the curse, and being of a serious turn he set himself very conscientiously to give proper answers to anxious young men and to enquiring journalists about questions of the most vital importance. This partly elating, partly humiliating, function of notoriety must have made him feel that the religious roots in his consciousness were of far greater use to him than their sickly efflorescence in his books. Thorough and

sincere as he is, the conclusion must have been forcible: better be honestly what our words mean that we are.

He had no doubts either about the intimate connection between the speedy disintegration of France, visible since the spreading of materialism under the Second Empire, and materialism itself. He had said several times—especially in the preface of *Le Disciple*—that the catastrophe of 1870 had been primarily brought about by a defeat of morals; now he saw that all the foundations of the family and the state were being undermined by ethical uncertainty bound with the disappearance of the religious creed. Probably the universal disruption which came along with the Dreyfus Affair in 1898—during which intellectual disorder ran riot and we saw the heyday of uncontrolled speculation—effectually took the band off his eyes. The danger of the community made him see the perils which lawless individual thinking can create, and conversely the value of the Church as a social factor made him pass over the minor difficulties which current

apologetics could not solve for philosophically-trained minds. At all events he felt the same wave which carried away his friend Brunetière just at that time, and the year after, the republication of his works gave him a solemn occasion of openly professing his belief.

What sort of a Catholic was he ? With men brought up religiously and sensitive to the numberless differences between them and such intellectual converts, there is always an uncomfortable feeling that they may be Catholics—as Voltaire was a Deist —from practical necessities postulating higher principles. Among the members of the *Action française* with whom Bourget is in sympathy, many are practising Catholics, while some of the most prominent are confessedly unbelievers, but the latter uphold Catholic principles quite as much as the former, from patriotic or, as they say, positive motives. Bourget himself, in 1905, praised Fustel de Coulanges, the famous historian, for writing in his will the following passage : " I wish to be buried according to the customs of the French, that is to say,

religiously. It is true that I neither practice nor believe in the Catholic religion, but I must remember that I was bred in it. Patriotism demands that if we do not think as our ancestors we may at least respect what they held to be the truth. . . ." [1]

This means that one can both be an unbeliever and act as a believer without incurring disgrace, and Bourget, instead of protesting, praises. Is he, then, one of those " political Catholics " who view the Church as a useful element in the Commonwealth ?

We should not hastily jump at such a conclusion. Beside the quotation above we could place others showing a warm intelligence of the sacramental doctrines and of the more mystical sides of the Catholic religion. Bourget, far from seeming to question and choose, is a resolute anti-Modernist. Probably he has done his best to assimilate the spirit of what he regards as traditional Catholicism, and there is no reason for suspecting that he at all differs in his creed from the average

[1] *Pages de critique et de doctrine*, II, p. 160.

believer, and did not wish to do so from the first.

As he became thus openly religious, Bourget began to assert himself in another direction, viz. as a Royalist. Is there any connection between Catholicism and the Monarchy? Certainly not. Even now, after the separation of Church and State, the banishment of the religious orders and the confiscation of their property, there is no hopeless breach between the Church and the French Republic. At the time of Bourget's conversion, things were even more remote from any antagonism between the Catholic and the Republican animus. Leo XIII was still alive, and the tendency was to regard as stiffnecked and rebellious those who would take no notice of the Pope's invitation to accept the Republican institutions. So it could not be Bourget's newly acquired convictions that made him almost immediately declare himself an enemy of the democratic doctrines. What was it then? Perhaps his partiality for the aristocracy, perhaps his aversion from the vulgarity inherent in politics and

politicians, largely his lifelong desire for a *régime* likely to act as a social and ultimately a moral breakwater, undoubtedly above all the passion for logic which will appear in the brief *exposé* we shall now give of his outstanding ideas.

Bourget's likes and dislikes in politics are based on two main tendencies which he has shown on many occasions : he is a traditionalist and he is an anti-democrat. Traditionalism derives its name from the doctrine —very much amplified—of de Bonald whom Bourget has carefully studied and greatly admires. In its present state this doctrine can be summed up as follows—

Our country does not consist merely of the space it occupies and the people who now live in it. There were Frenchmen before us and there will be after us. Dead or unborn as they are, those Frenchmen have rights which we ought to respect. With the future we cannot deal, but we are sure to work for it if we do our best in the present while thinking of the past, studying it and fondly continuing it. The mistake of the French Revolution was

double. First of all, the Revolutionists deliberately opened a gulf between them and the generations which had gone before. At a few years', almost at a few months' notice the habit was acquired of referring to *l'ancienne France* as a thing dead and gone. In the second place, the Revolutionists severed the individual from the social body. The rights of man mean nothing if not the rights of individual man against society, viewed not as its protector but as its tyrant. As a consequence the tendency since 1789 has been not only in politics but in literature, and in the civil legislation, to defend private against corporate activity. The results are before our eyes : France at the end of the nineteenth century was so divided as to deserve the name which Lamartine once gave to Italy : *poussière humaine*, and the Dreyfus Affair was the triumph of one individual over the whole country. So much for the evil. What is the remedy ? A return to the traditional spirit. What does this mean ? Practically a return to the spirit of the monarchy, the kings of France having

always been the living bond of tradition. And so Bourget is a Royalist because he is a traditionalist. In the second place he is an anti-democrat. Democracy is the government of the community not by itself but by individuals. What are those individuals? Elected representatives. How elected? By the universal suffrage, *i. e.* the voice of incompetence. Representative of what? Mostly of greed, of unreasoned jealousies and of doubtful claims. To what results? To the so-called crisis of French Parliamentarism. Bourget insists that there is no crisis of Parliamentarism. Parliamentarism in its essence is bad and can only result in crises. Wherever it seems to work better, as in England, it is found to be steadied by a traditional element, *viz.* a king and a hereditary assembly. This accounts for men like Balzac, Taine, Renan, gradually coming to express deep disgust of the democracy, and preference for some sort of aristocracy. Now the counterweight as well as the representative of an aristocracy can only be a king.

So Bourget in the last twelve or thirteen years has been a Monarchist and a Catholic, and his religious as well as his monarchical tendencies are of a distinctly systematic, traditional and on the whole reactionary type. His inclination here, as in criticism and in fiction, is characteristically Latin. Whereas I have no doubt that my English reader has just heard this *exposé* with his inborn mistrust of theories and a subconscious longing for examples, historical discussions, and generally testings through facts, Bourget delights in systems. He may well tell us that in politics, as in art, he is a positivist, a realist and an observer; we know that he is this through the contagion of his models—Balzac and Taine, not Le Play as he imagines—but his mind since its settling down after the failure of *Edel* and the success of the first Essays, has become more and more systematic.

It remains at present to say how Bourget in the last thirteen years has expressed the ideas we have just summarized. Three great novels, *L'Etape* (1901), *Un Divorce* (1903), and *L'Emigré* (1905); four plays, *Un Divorce*

(1908); *L'Emigré*(1909),*La Barricade* (1910), and *Le Tribun* (1911); above all numerous articles, essays or addresses republished under the titles of *Pages de critique et de doctrine* (2 vols., 1912) and *Sociologie et littérature*, make it easy for us to see him as he has been since the beginning of this century and as, in all likelihood, he will henceforward remain : the novels, the plays, and above all the articles are not only reactionary but dogmatic, and show us a Bourget as different from the yielding critic of the *Essais de psychologie* as the monocled elderly gentleman is from the dreamy poet whose fetching picture appears at the head of the *Poésies*.

L'Etape sets forth a harsh thesis, one which seems to have been chosen purposely to set the teeth of modern generations on edge, *viz.* the individual ought not to make his way too quickly, it is the whole family that should progressively go up, and when things happen differently mischief inevitably ensues. Joseph Monneron, a peasant's son, has risen to be a *lycée* professor, and every misfortune falls on him and his family :

he ought to have stayed on his father's farm, gradually cultivating his mind as well as his land; after a few generations another Monneron would be born, ready for a change of level, and thanks to whom the family could be lifted up to the *bourgeois* class.

This idyllic view is speculatively defensible and even attractive, but thousands of facts give it the lie, and the novel itself does not prove what it is intended to prove: the most superficial reader can see that if Monneron had brought up his children more religiously or even more firmly, he would have averted the catastrophes which overwhelm him. The novel, as a novel, is a masterpiece, so well knit, so richly conceived as a situation that the characters cannot but become dramatic themselves and give us the illusion of being at last true to life, seen through and not superimposed upon the action. As it is, the book caused as much admiration as impatience.

Un Divorce, almost as powerful, has also faults: this time the thesis is right—divorce

is productive of woes to the children of the divorced and ultimately to themselves —but it is urged in a harsh, cruel manner— so harsh and cruel that it turns the reader against the lesson enforced—and, as in *L'Etape*, it is not verified by the story: Gabrielle Darras might have had the same difficulties on account of her and her first husband's son, even if the husband had died and she could have married again religiously.

L'Emigré is also written in a supercilious mood. There is no place in our democracy for the virtues of the old aristocracy, and their sons have to seek their fortunes in less hostile countries.

The three novels betray deep dissatisfaction with many aspects of modern life, which is natural enough, but they also show an antagonism with the Age itself, a wholesale regret of the past which no amount of talent could make contagious. I believe that the mistake which Bourget made in conceiving *L'Etape* immediately alienated many of his readers from him.

In the last few years he has—without

ceasing to write many short stories—exchanged his old medium for the stage, and he is as successful a playwright as he was a novelist.[1] His last play, *La Crise*, as well as *Un Cas de conscience* (1910), and his first dramatic effort, *Le Luxe des autres* (1902), seem to have been written merely for the pleasure of doing it, but *Un Divorce*, *L'Emigré*, *La Barricade* and *Le Tribun* are plays with a purpose, and the purpose is very much the same as that of the novels. *La Barricade* is an episode of a strike with the conclusion that as the men are on one side and the masters on the other, if the men use violence the masters had better nerve themselves to use it too. *Le Tribun* properly analyzed is exclusively psychological, but Bourget wanted it to be more than that. Portal, formerly a professor of philosophy, later a politician, and now Prime Minister, is still the philosopher he used to be. He considers the family ties and the family feeling as superstitions.

[1] He generally employs trained collaborators, and the actor Guitry has claimed angrily to have been an insufficiently recognized one.

Experience teaches him that such superstitions are not easily uprooted. He discovers that his son is a thief, and discovers at the same time that there is enough left in him of unregenerate nature to prevent him from delivering up the culprit. Of *Un Divorce* and *L'Emigré*, it is useless to speak, as the plays do not differ from the novels, and were not even staged by Bourget.

On the whole neither the plays nor the novels are very effective preaching. *L'Etape* convinced nobody; *L'Emigré* and *La Barricade* gave an impression that Bourget liked neither his time, nor the poor—against which last inference he protested without complete success; what of truth there is in *Un Divorce* is a mere truism; *Le Tribun* either enforces another truism, *viz.* that fathers will love their children, or is only the working out of a highly dramatic situation. Everything considered, the lesson we can derive from Bourget's latest novels and plays would be hardly more tangible than the morals he insisted were diffused in his earlier works, if we were not conscious of a resolute attitude in the author,

and above all if we were not helped and led on by the articles we are going to speak of. The fact is he is too much of an artist, and, in spite of himself, too much of a modern and even ultra-modern man to make his apologues flat by making them demonstrative. At any rate they leave us once more under the impression that fiction and the drama are poor adjuncts of morals, and that in this field at any rate an ounce of theory from a person qualified to give it is worth pounds of example made to look true to life and consequently as perplexing as life. Novelists and dramatists must make up their minds about this : two pages of Bossuet carry more moral weight than all the plays and prefaces of Alexandre Dumas the younger together.

The theory of morals Bourget has often tried to give, and his *Pages de critique et de doctrine* as well as his *Sociologie et littérature* are far from representing all his efforts in that direction. In fact it is his attitude as a theorist of politics and social morals that those of us who have followed him in his career are almost compelled to see whenever

we now think of him. The professor, or, as he prefers to say, the anatomist and physiologist in him, have gradually pushed the novelist into the background, and when we are told that Bourget never opens a literary book and devotes all his time to sociology we take it as a matter of course. He appears to us as a philosopher by taste who has forgotten that he was a writer by vocation. It is unfortunate that in this last avatar he should seem less convincing than he is convinced and decidedly unsympathetic. Let me remind the reader once more that I am carefully restricting myself to what a person who has never met Bourget or any of his acquaintance is likely to think of him. His personal qualities and shortcomings have nothing to do with a literary impression: it is in this sense that I bluntly call him unsympathetic.

He is not alone in having undergone a process bringing him back to traditional views. His friends Brunetière and Coppée became Catholics as he is; his old comrade, the poet Angellier, the present writer's very dear professor, was theoretically a Royalist

as he is; Jules Lemaître is like himself a member of the *Action française*, and they probably are in complete intellectual communion. Why is it that even the bristly and quarrelsome Brunetière and the hermit Angellier were so much more persuasive ? Why is it that Jules Lemaître, in spite of his old scepticism and changes, retains so much more of proselytizing charm ? Probably Bourget lives too much apart. He always did. He seems to have always seen distinction as inseparable from aloofness : the consequence is that his distinction appeared affected when he was young, and appears stiff now that he is advancing in years. He is in his study or —not very frequently—on the platform, he never is in the fray as Brunetière and Lemaître were so often, he is not even in the banqueting hall. As I said at the beginning of this essay, he has become little more than a voice from the Riviera, an impersonal prophet with a great deal of Cassandra in him, and I am not sure that he is popular even with the young men in the *Action française* who applaud

him whenever they have a chance. We always know what to expect from him: whatever is under discussion we are sure that he will take the most intransigently traditional side. He has none of the generous-heartedness of M. de Mun, or the liberalism of M. d'Haussonville—whom he met three or four times on his way, certainly to his damage—or of the intelligent doubts of Barrès: what he thinks the truth he delivers with conviction, with logic and knowledge, never with good humour, or with fire or even warmth. Sometimes there is a tendency to unbend in his tone, but he immediately repents, and the usual rigidity soon sets in again. Never did a man who dealt with life so many years talk so much like a mere book.

Add that he is not even personal in his ideas: what he gives us he has borrowed from de Bonald, or M. Maurras, and by an inevitable consequence he sometimes borrows a tone which used not to be his own. Where he had written once "the republican error" he substitutes "the hideous republican error." In the same way he

says " the abominable Jules Ferry " where he used to think that no epithet was necessary. There was no pleasure recently in hearing him doctorally speak of Rousseau through a whole article as a mere madman, and in the jargon of a specialist in mental troubles. Too often he is not only the mirror of other men's doctrines but the echo of their passion. In short, most of the articles in which he has given us his opinion on the questions of the day are both in matter and style less independent and less original, though more outspoken, than he would have written them at the time he published *Outre-mer:* they are the work of a critic, I should say a censor, far beyond the stage where discussion is welcome; the inflexibility of age—that stiff brother of youthful prejudice—is upon them.

We leave Bourget here. Although he is only sixty there is little chance that he will ever be different. It seems strange that the same man who once was looked upon as the dangerously seductive incarnation of

dilettantism should now be one of the mouthpieces of uncompromising conservatism; but if we look back to his beginnings and remember the curve of his development we shall be less surprised. It is the instinct of self-preservation accompanied with a diffident feeling which made him pass from the bubbling tentativeness of his youth to the restricted mastery of his prime; and it is the responsibility which he felt upon him as he became thus a leader, along with a consciousness that analysis was an insufficient vehicle of morals, that drove him back to doctrinaire traditionalism. As he is sensitive and imaginative I have no doubt that the pleasure of being in communion with the best representatives of the classes he has so long and so complacently described acts upon him too. He may like to hear Jules Lemaître repeat that Royalism has all the freshness of youth in it, but surely he is happy in thinking of himself as a man of an aristocratic past.

VIII

The conclusions to which we must arrive at the end of this investigation will cause no surprise. Bourget is not one of the great writers. We never see in him any of the welling abundance, of the richness of imagination, of the facility coupled with rarity which are characteristic of men like Balzac, Tolstoï or even Thackeray. No Socratic demon dwells in his soul. We expect no strangeness from him, no unforeseen achievement, no pathetic falling off either. In his youth he was what Stevenson remained all his life, nervously though deliciously attentive to his own inspiration, ready to follow the Muse wherever she listed, and I firmly believe she might have led him far. He had also deep sympathy along with the power of judging and resisting, and that gave him something of the universality of genius.

Towards his thirtieth year he discovered a vein and a method, and the combination of both made him feel the dangerous pleasure of easy production. From that moment he was a slave to the demands of the public and wrote twenty times over the same book, with truly artistic enjoyment, I admit, but yet more as an artisan than an artist. Real critics soon felt that he had given up the hope in which he had lived so long of producing a masterpiece, and that like most modern writers he counted more for the duration of his work on its bulk and influence, on its documentary and historical importance, than on its creative value. It is something to have been the initiator or the rediscoverer of a method, the chief of a school and the destroyer of another, but these merits entitle a man rather to a chapter in the History of Literature than to a place on the shelves of posterity. Bourget will be consulted and referred to, I am afraid he will not be read. Not one of his books can be placed beside *Adolphe*, for instance, for genuine passion, and he lacks the perfection of craftsman-

ship which keeps green works otherwise of secondary order, those of Mérimée, for example, and probably those of Anatole France.

Throughout this little book, as in the lines above, I have estimated Bourget from the canons gathered from the best literature, and I have measured him by the greatest. I know of no greater honour that could be given him. The many modern men who on the contrary adopt the standard of newspapers and the estimation of mere popularity, whose classics are at best Flaubert and sometimes inferior writers, will think me according to their bent, harsh or unappreciative. It matters little. Yet I should not like to part with Bourget without saying that, compared with most contemporary novelists, he towers above them. If he cannot be called powerful, he is, however, exceptionally robust. A man who, if he died to-day, would leave more than thirty volumes of fiction, each one of which is remarkable by its balance, construction and logic, its sustained interest, and yet

complete freedom from tricks, its philosophical background and range of illustration, its moral and artistic conscientiousness, has a right to the gratitude of his country. What we say of Bourget's importance as an artist, we can say as well of his moral and social influence. It was real from the first and has constantly increased, but it was adulterated when the writer was young by his dilettantism which the public mistook for morbid looseness, as it is hampered today by the frown which Bourget's wisdom unfortunately wears. But the development in a straight line of a man so anxious about moral issues, emphasized by his religious conversion, cannot but have been productive of effects. Whatever we may think of the pragmatism involved in Bourget's evolution, the change for the better which we have seen in France since the patriotic awakening of 1906, is exactly parallel with it, with the same alloy of prejudice and the same nervous resolution. Surely in a country where literary talent counts so much Bourget's example must have had weight: the masses are not conscious of the objec-

tions which can be made to a body of doctrines like that professed by him, and the instinct of self-preservation makes them welcome all that is truly vital in it.

On the whole Bourget's career when death throws its veil on the flaws we have pointed out will appear noble. There will be respect for his love of beauty, his sincerity and the cleanliness towards which he very early tended, and the respect will not be unmingled with emotion at the thoughts of his patient lifelong labour.

A CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF BOURGET'S LIFE

1852. Sept. 2. Born at Amiens.
1867. Enters Sainte-Barbe, Paris.
1870. Is awarded second prize in Latin composition.
1872. Takes his licentiate's degree and begins teaching at the Ecole Bossuet.
1873. Travels in Italy and Greece. Begins contributing to various magazines and papers.
1875. *La Vie inquiète* (Paris, Lemerre).
1878. *Edel* (*ib. id.*)
1880. Gives up teaching.
1882. *Les Aveux* (Paris, Lemerre).
1883. *Renan* (series of *Célébrités contemporaines*).
Essais de psychologie contemporaines, Vol. I.
L'Irréparable, a story.
1885. *Essais de psychologie contemporaine*, Vol. II.
Cruelle enigme.
1886. *Un Crime d'amour.*
1887. *André Cornélis.*
1888. *Mensonges.*
1889. *Etudes et portraits* I, II.
Etudes anglaises.
Le Disciple.
Pastels.
1890. Marriage with Mlle. David from Antwerp.
Un Cœur de femme.
1891. *Nouveaux pastels.*
Physiologie de l'amour moderne.
Sensations d'Italie.
1892. *La Terre promise.*
1893. *Cosmopolis.*

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

1894. *Un Scrupule.*
Steeple-chase.
Un Saint.
1895. June 13. Received into the French Academy.
Appointed officer of the Legion of Honour.
Outre-mer.
1896. *Une Idylle tragique.*
1897. *Recommencements.*
Voyageuses.
1898. *Complications sentimentales.*
La Duchesse bleue.
1899. *Complete Works* (Paris, Plon).
1900. *Drames de famille.*
L'Ecran.
Le Fantôme.
1901. *Un Homme d'affaires.*
1902. *Monique.*
L'Etape.
1903. *L'Eau profonde.*
Les Pas dans les pas.
1904. *Un Divorce.*
1905. *Les Deux sœurs.*
1906. *Les Détours du cœur.*
L'Emigré.
1907. *La Dame qui a perdu son peintre.*
1908. *Un Divorce*, play.
1909. *L'Emigré*, play.
1910. *La Barricade*, play.
Un Cas de conscience, play.
1912. *Pages de critique et de doctrine*, 2 Vols
Le Tribun, play.

INDEX OF NAMES

Adam, Mme., 37
Amiel, 11, 45, 47
Angellier, 110, 111

Balzac, 2, 7, 10, 29, 44, 73, 80, 84, 85, 86, 102, 103, 119
Barbey d'Aurevilly, 2, 20, 37, 69, 88
Barrès, 1, 5
Bashkirtseff, 72
Baudelaire, 7, 10, 23, 44, 46
Bergson, 43, 64
Berthelot, 63
Bismarck, 14
Bonald, de, 100, 112
Bossuet, 109
Bouchor, 19
Boutroux, 64
Brunetière, 17, 19, 37, 42, 57, 61, 81, 97, 110, 111
Burney, Miss, 27
Byron, 29, 60

Campan, Mme., 74
Cazalis, 19
Cervantes, 7
Chateaubriand, 2
Constant, 50, 74
Coppée, 19, 25, 110
Craven, Mrs., 17

Daudet, Alph., 2, 7
Dickens, 7, 73
Donnay, 89
Dreyfus, 96, 101
Dumas *fils*, 37, 45, 47, 76, 80, 109

Eliot, George, 57

Féletz, de, 42
Ferry, 113
Feuillet, 57, 74
Fielding, 7, 73
Flaubert, 7, 10, 44, 45, 46, 47, 117
France, 1, 22, 90, 117
Fustel de Coulanges, 97

Giraud, 24, 36
Goncourt, 45, 47, 90
Grandmougin, 19
Guitry, 107

Hardy, Thomas, 80
Haussonville, d', 112
Heine, 29
Hugo, 2, 10, 20, 26

Indy, d', 20

Lamartine, de, 10, 101

INDEX OF NAMES

Lanson, 12
Lavedan, 89
Leconte de Lisle, 37, 45, 47
Lemaître, 1, 13, 36, 56, 61, 62, 87, 90, 111, 114
Leo XIII, 99

Maupassant, 19, 56, 90
Maurras, 112
Mendès, 36
Mérimée, 117
Michael Angelo, 21
Mun, de, 112
Musset, de, 7, 10, 11, 12, 20, 22, 26

Napoleon, 29
Newton, 72
Nisard, 42

Pascal, 39
Pigeon, 21
Play, le, 103
Plessis, 19
Plutarch, 10
Ponchon, 22

Renan, 12, 22, 44, 45, 47, 63, 93, 102, 104
Ribot, 36
Richepin, 19, 21, 25
Rochefoucauld, la, 81
Rousseau, 113

Sainte-Beuve, 42, 70
Sainte-René, 21
Sand, George, 19, 57
Scott, Sir Walter, 7
Shakespeare, 7
Sorel, Georges, 89
Souza, Mme. de, 82
Spencer, Herbert, 64, 94
Spinoza, 39
Stendhal, 7, 10, 29, 44, 45, 47, 50
Stevenson, 115
Sully-Prudhomme, 20, 23, 25

Taine, 2, 6, 12, 20, 37, 39, 42, 44, 45, 47, 62, 63, 102, 103
Thackeray, 115
Tolstoï, 115
Tourgueniev, 37, 45, 46

Van Daëll, 5
Vogüé, Melchior de, 48

Weiss, 7

Zola, 17, 57, 85, 90

Richard Clay & Sons, Ltd., London and Bungay.

Boston Public Library
3 9999 10504 014 9